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## A BLIND MAN'S NOTIONS ABOUT GHOSTS.

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'I dreamt, my lady came and found me dead,  
Strange dream! that gives a dead man  
leave to think.'

Now I am often tempted to  
alter Romeo's words, and read,

'Strange dream! that gives a blind man  
leave to see.'

for it will surprise no one to hear that in my dreams I see as plainly now as before my infirmity overtook me. Yet, conscious that I am blind, I still behold in my sleep people and places with whom and with which I was once familiar. Yet, knowing I cannot see, I still see; and without any surprise at this odd contradiction. This is only one more proof that of all the marvellous phenomena of life, dreaming is, perhaps, the most marvellous.

'Strange state of being; for 'tis still to be :  
Senseless, to feel, and with sealed eyes  
to see.'

Thus much can be truly said for us all; but, remembering that my eyes are always sealed, in one way the marvel is increased; for sleeping or waking, I live, as it were, in a world of dreams, never, of course, seeing anything in either state through the medium of the optic nerve. The difference, con-

sequently, between the sleeping and the waking state is, in this respect, not so marked as might at first be expected; for, unless by an effort I remind myself that I am blind, I see my friend, after a fashion, while I am broad awake and talking to him, nearly as vividly as I should do at times in a dream; the fact that in reality I cannot see him in either state being scarcely more present to me in one than in the other. Indeed, in accordance with the perversity of dreams generally, I seem to be more intuitively conscious of my deprivation of sight whilst dreaming than at any other time, although, as I have hinted, the knowledge of the strange anomaly inspires no wonder; whereas, naturally it does when, being awake, I remind myself of my infirmity. Until I do this, however, the familiar voice, the mere peculiar touch of the hand, is sufficient to bring the personality of my friend instantly before me. I mean I have a visual image of him, not necessarily in his exact likeness (that could hardly be; for perhaps he is one whose acquaintance I have made since the curtain fell), but an image, an entity, a being with eyes, nose,

and mouth, like the rest of us ; not distinct in form of feature, colour of hair, and the rest, but still sufficiently so in some general way to become physiologically identified with the man I know, to stand for me as the presentment of that man ; and each friend I have known since my blindness offers to me some special presentment. And this image, vague, indefinite, as it may be, starts into my presence the moment my friend opens his lips ; and thus he will appear the same blurred, indefinable, but still perfectly recognisable and unmistakable being when I chance to dream of him. Nay, when I do dream of him he often becomes endowed with more definite personal characteristics ; and thus the image in the dream becomes so far more real than that person's image whilst talking to him when awake. With those, however, whom I have known in earlier days, and can remember clearly, the illusion is, of course, more complete, and, as it were, stronger in a dream than when they are with me in my waking hours. When one of these speaks to me, there he at once stands out before me as he used to do. Time has made no ravages with him ; and unconsciously I behold not only his features, but his expression—the kindling eye, the dilating nostril, the cheery smiling lips. These are all apparently visible. Yet, let me but pull myself up for a moment, and say, 'Where is this creature ?' and lo, he has but little more substantiality than when I encounter him in my sleep, perhaps not so much. Being but an air-drawn vision, a phantom of the mind, an image imprinted only on what I may call the retina of my mind in both cases, he has more visible existence in my slumbers than anywhere else. Hence, I am inclined to urge, in

a much more literal sense than the expression is generally used, the life of a person who has become blind is but a dream. Literally he is, or his existence is, 'such stuff as dreams are made on, and his little life is rounded with a sleep.' Of course I refer to visual images.

I have often been asked to set down as clearly as I can some of my ideas on these points, and to describe the sensations I have in dreaming ; and while I am complying I am led into a few speculations as to what are called ghostly apparitions, because I am inclined to think that no people see so many ghosts as the blind. If I have made myself clear in what I have written above, it can be understood that all that is ever visible to the blind, all that their mind's eye can ever compass or conjure up, must be ghostly, 'like the baseless fabric of a vision,' fading, ever fading, and yet being ever renewed. They, too, being mortal, like the rest, are influenced, but in a greater degree, by what we hear spoken of as the inner life of a man. Now the blind exist exclusively—I mean so far as visual images are concerned—in an inner life, the outer darkness throwing them eternally in upon themselves ; seeing by the light that is within them, not, perhaps, always introspectively, but—I had almost written materially, positively—their very surroundings are, as it were, in themselves, because what they know of their surroundings is inwardly or self evolved. Their room, or, which is the same thing to them, the aspect of it, is only within themselves, entirely a mental picture. Lacking sight, the most superior sense, they draw but the merest suspicion from without of what really is, what really exists ; for their touch, their smell, their hearing,

give them but a hint; the substantiality is created by themselves, in their own especial and peculiar manufactory, lying deep in the remotest recesses of their consciousness. The hardness of the wall, the softness of the pillow, the smoothness of satin, the roughness of frieze, the harshness or the contrary of a voice, the sweetness of the rose, or pungency of the pipe, are but so many crude bits of raw material, out of which the blind, within themselves, build up the actual presentment of the substantiality; and this being so, much of the very aspect of these substantialities must depend on the medium, on the action of the machinery through which the slight materials of which it is composed pass in the process of manufacture; and ere it is realised as a complete whole in the mind of the manufacturer, or, in other words, the look of the substantiality, reality, embodiment—call it what we will—must depend on the temperament and character of the blind builder. As with other men, upon his temperament will depend his conception of his environment and the general circumstances of his existence. By his temperament, as with other men, they will be shaped and coloured; and still, as with other men, upon his interpretation of them must depend the amount of pleasure and happiness he will get out of his life; only that, unlike other men, his actual conception of his surroundings cannot be definite. At the best, they must be phantasmic, and consequently more open to misinterpretation and more liable to change. Then, again, he still being mortal, has his moods, attributable perhaps to health, perhaps to a varying temper, which will modify, alter, twist, exaggerate, contort, as the case may be.

Granting, then, that these, roughly speaking, are necessarily some of the conditions upon which a blind man is condemned to pass through the world, is it not just possible that the man happily possessed of all his faculties and being of a favourable temperament, that is, nervous, sensitive, highly imaginative, and, of course, still subject to the influence of health: is it not possible, I say, that such an one, who declares that he has seen a ghost or has experienced some strange vision or presentment, of which a distinct vision was a part, has been for the moment either dreaming, as the blind dream, or, being awake, has seen as the blind see?—the blind, to whom all is but a vision, and to whom all their fellow-creatures are merely ghosts. I do not know, but it seems to me that hosts of nervous, sensitive, imaginative people, and those who are often what we call absent, dreamy, thoughtful mooners, may be overtaken at times by some condition which is akin to that of blindness. They withdraw themselves so entirely within themselves as to be utterly unconscious of the precise nature of their surroundings, making no use, for the time, of their optic nerve; they live in a world of their own, just as the blind do, constructing it and peopling it, as the blind do, from their inner consciousness and previously acquired knowledge; a dream-world, in short, in which 'all things are possible.'

I may be told there is nothing new in this, and that everybody is aware that this state is common among the seeing; but I believe that it is of far greater intensity in some cases than is supposed; and it is this very intensity—just this very reality of the unreality—which makes the temporary visionary world, which some see-

ing people create for themselves within themselves, exactly like the world of ghosts and spectres, dreams and phantaems, in which the blind, perforce, perpetually dwell.

We hear of marvellous ghost stories, more or less well authenticated ; and some time ago one of our newspapers teemed with records of ghostly personal experiences, any one of which almost might serve to illustrate my notion. But without selecting any special one, let us take the gist of what a certain class of these point to—the commonest class—that is, where some beloved one, far away, appears, so to speak, *in propria persona*, and in more or less substantial form, of course to the intense astonishment and terror—to use the mildest term—of the witness. Later on it is discovered that this beloved one has at that identical moment been in great peril of his or her life, or has actually died. This, I say, is the pith of the commonest sort of ghost story, and has formed the basis of many popular traditions, novels, and dramas, that of the *Corsican Brothers* being a notable example ; and, in a way, its very commonness seems to make it confirmatory of what few people doubt, viz. that the mind of one person may be under the sway of another, either through intense sympathy or love, or through a superior strength of will, and which sway is not appreciably lessened by what we understand as physical distance. Given, then, the existence of this sway in some particular case of a seeing person, and where the natural conditions are favourable to him—favourable, that is, in that he is either ordinarily or temporarily, through a low state of health, nervous and sensitive, and is, moreover, normally what is called a person who

lives in the clouds—and it shall be quite possible for him, according to my notion, to pass into a mental state entirely consonant with that of the blind. Oblivious of all facts around him, wrapped up in his own thoughts—and which, if not consciously, are, nevertheless, tending towards the absent one whom he dominates or is dominated by, or between whom and himself there exists some sort of bond—he sits brooding or is lying in bed, when, hey, presto ! he suddenly thinks he sees the absent one standing before him, palpably, unmistakably, and precisely as a blind man would do in similar circumstances. Of course, the mental condition of both is not easy to define, but it is, I fancy, very much akin—much more so than we at first might think. To the blind man the presence would be a positive reality—as real, that is, as anything he ever sees ; and if, in a way, the man not blind is reduced to the same position for the time, as I feel inclined to insist he is, the ghost is as much a reality to the one as to the other ; at any rate, it takes the same hold, making the same impressions, and producing the same mental results. The only difference would be, when the first effect of the surprise, momentary or prolonged, had passed, the blind man would start to his feet, and, recalling himself to himself, would find the vision replaced by some common tangible objects, and the usual blank which is ever before him. The seeing one, on the contrary, pulling himself together, would, with his true sight—by the exercise of his optic nerve—dispel the vision, and find it replaced by his ordinary surroundings, a consciousness of which he would recover instantly ; but he would still assert that he had seen a

ghost. And truly he has; *but he has been blind while he saw it!* His physical retina has been obscured as thoroughly as his blind brother's; but the 'mental retina' has carried the truth home to the mind of each with equal force. In each case the ghost has existed—has been created—within themselves; and if it be a verity to the blind, as I have endeavoured to show it is, why should it not be to the seeing? It has been built up out of a previously acquired knowledge of the reality, the impress of which is mysteriously, but indelibly, graven on some of those tablets of the sensations called memory, and which we carry about with us without thinking of them, because, as is said, they take up so little room. These deeply imprinted characters have leaped suddenly into a sort of definite shape and meaning, when summoned by circumstances accidentally, but imperceptibly, associated with them, and have become the ghost of their original form and substance.

With reference, however, to this previously acquired knowledge of the reality, I am of course supposing the case of a blind man who has not always been afflicted. To speak colloquially, he must not have been blind from birth, but must, of course, at some time in his life have had the opportunity of knowing, visually, what things are like; otherwise he could not form for himself any idea of the aspect of the absent one, any more than he could form any idea of colour or light, and, consequently, could not be conscious of a ghost in the sense of which I am speaking of one. Therefore, on the precise nature of his mental pictures, I do not pretend to speculate. He would have no visual images, though probably he would get an equiva-

lent ghost out of an imagined utterance of a voice, or by the fancy that his sensitive finger-tips were in contact with a familiar form. I mean that a man born blind might dream or imagine whilst awake, as vividly as when asleep (always supposing him to be of a favourable temperament), that he had heard his friend speaking to him, that he recognised his voice, and that he felt his familiar form beneath his hand as he passed it over face or figure. In this way even he would see or be conscious of a ghost, but it would be an aural, or a tactful one, or perhaps both. The mental embodiment or substance would be constructed equally, in a way, from previously acquired knowledge through the sense of hearing and feeling—knowledge acquired from what his ears or fingers had taught him, by listening to, or coming in contact with, the fellow-creatures with whom he was familiar. This, however, is a digression. I return therefore to my notion that the seeing man who beholds a ghost does so only when he is reduced, mentally, to the same level as that in which I and the rest of the blind have to pass our lives. He, just as we do, summons from the past, spectral appearances, such as are *our* daily and only companions. With the present as it positively exists in his immediate environment, he, being in a ghostly mood, has no more to do than we have. He sees simply as we see, with this advantage: that he can at will dispel his phantom troop by letting in upon them the fierce light of the actual, which we can never do. The plain fact, therefore, being in so many words that those who see ghosts are for the moment blind dreamers (whether awake or asleep is of no consequence), there is nothing very extraordinary in their sometimes

dreaming about, and therefore seeing, any one with whom their minds are linked. And if they chance so to dream and so to see a ghost on some momentous occasion, there is nothing very extraordinary in that occasion tallying at times with a crisis in the life of the absent one, for, for the moment, they are dreamers with 'sealed eyes.' It may be the coincidence in many instances alone which brings this about, but, being rather a startling one, it is not unnatural that it should be set down as supernatural. On the other hand, I do not pretend to say that it is never supernatural, or that it is not due to this mysterious link between mind and mind, and which is not affected by distance. It may be: I am not discussing this side of the question. I only am disposed to contend that the mere apparition is the air-drawn spectre created out of a previous knowledge of realities during a temporary, abnormal, mental, and physical condition, corresponding to that which is normal with the blind.

There is another way of looking at the subject from my point, and of speculating on it further by a transposition of the conditions. Just as ordinary folks possessed of their eyes must, as I assume, when they behold a ghost, be more or less reduced to a state of dream-like blindness, so may the blind be brought into a sort of ghostseeing mood by a dream-like restoration to sight. The 'strange dream that gives a blind man leave to see' may be illustrated by a story, said to be well authenticated, of a lady, who, having lost her sight for many years, imagined suddenly that for several moments her vision had been restored to her. She was sitting with her family, whose appearance she, of course, well remembered, in her drawing-room, and with the as-

pect of which she had also been previously acquainted, when she declared with a terrified start, precisely as if she had seen a ghost, that she could see where and with whom she was sitting. She rose from her chair, and in sudden amazement exclaimed, 'Why, I can see you all plainly, as I used to do!' and covering her eyes with her hands for a moment, she had half ejaculated a thanksgiving, when she dropped back into her seat moaning out that she was blind again. Nothing would ever convince her that she had not been temporarily reendowed with sight. But her assertion, when tested by a physical examination of her eyes by the oculist, was proved to have been, beyond all doubt, without foundation. The physical condition of her optic nerves made it absolutely impossible that her sight could ever have come back to her, even for an instant, save by a miracle. She nevertheless maintained that what she had stated was true; and nothing could ever shake her belief.

The explanation given by the oculist, with whom I have conversed, was exactly that which I should have expected. The poor lady, sitting comfortably in her easy-chair, 'with all appliances and means to boot,' had just for one second dozed, and, in that momentary sleep, had been visited by a dream of extraordinary vividness, in which her mental retina had received and conveyed to her mind an exact presentment of the scene, practically identical with that by which she was surrounded. In short, she had seen a ghost or ghosts. The phenomena of dreaming are too mysterious to allow of much useful speculation on the subject; but it is fair to assume that it was only the coincidence of her dreaming

a dream that practically corresponded in character with the reality of her environment at the moment—that it was her family she beheld, pretty much as they were in reality grouped about her—that made her imagine that her sight had been restored. Had she, instead, dreamt in that moment, however vividly, of some entirely different scene, she never could have been beguiled into the belief that her eyesight had returned. She would have accepted the vision as a vision and nothing more. The accident alone, I repeat, of her having dreamt of her family established the illusion in her mind. Whether or not the presence of those near and dear to her influenced the nature of her dream no one can say. I think it possibly did, upon the principle above alluded to of the influence of the strong mental bond of union likely to exist between people closely allied to each other by blood and affection—the 'Corsican Brothers' principle, in fact. Anyway, whatever it was which caused her to dream as she did—whatever it was which created in her mind the sense of seeing what she saw—the vision itself could have been naught else but a ghostly one; and it was only its intense vividness, confirmed by the literal facts which accidentally existed at the moment, that convinced her of its reality.

Now, supposing the lady had not been blind, and had had her momentary dream, and someone, observing her nod and her eyes close, had said, 'Aunt, or mother, you are going to sleep,' she would have indignantly rejected the aspersion upon her politeness, and would have said, as people do in similar circumstances, 'Nonsense; I saw you all as I see you now. I have never lost sight of you for

a moment; going to sleep, indeed—absurd!' And again, had a vision of equal vividness and brevity during a momentary doze visited the couch or chair of any one with all her senses intact; and had it chanced to consist of a scene in which figured some absent one, and who might have happened, by coincidence at that same moment, to have been going through some crisis in his fate, why the dreamer, being for the instant, according to my notion, reduced to the level of a blind person, would have declared she had seen a ghost. Roundly speaking, then, everybody and everything that we see with our 'mind's eye,' when awake or asleep, partakes, I submit, so closely of the character of those apparitions which are said to be ghosts, that it is, after all, a mere question of degree in their vividness and our imaginativeness as to the effect they produce on us, or as to how much we believe in their supernatural origin. Therefore, so far from not believing in ghosts, I believe we all see them—constantly. Unless, however, some special coincidence chances to give to any vividly mind-drawn picture an especial significance, we are so accustomed to live in their midst that we take no heed of their existence. In dreamland, or in real-land, 'with sealed eyes to see,' is no such marvel then, when all is said and done; for, if we are but rightly attuned in mood, temperament, and disposition, we attach importance more or less great to any circumstances that coincide; and the stronger the coincidence and the larger our capacity for drawing mental pictures, the more and the stronger our belief in the so-called ghosts—the more and the stronger our inclination to attribute their appearance to the supernatural.

Not until we test their substantiality—the seeing man with his actual eyes, the blind man with his fingers—do we arrive at the truth that they are nothing but phantoms of the brain, existing merely on our mental retina,

and having nothing to do with our physical one. But, having arrived at this fact, I may say, with Prospero, 'these our actors, as I foretold you, are all spirits, and are melted into air—into thin air.'

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### COUSINS.

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WHITE lilies that have swayed so long beside  
 A brake of roses that there comes an hour  
 When the chill sculpture of the pallid flower  
 With the warm passion of the rose is dyed—  
 Such are these girls: the lily's grace allied  
 Unto the charm breathed from the red rose bower  
 Lives in their beauty, who with Nature's dower  
 Of golden-knotted hair are glorified.

In soul a lily, but in heart a rose,  
 Each waits for Time's best gift. Of all deeds done  
 Within this world of travail they know none—  
 Nothing of Hate's strange joys or Love's strange woes.  
 For girls like these men die; but I suppose  
 Most would, with me, prefer to live for one.

F. FRANKFORT MOORE.

## THE LINES BEHIND THE SHUTTER.

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Most houses have a story ; I don't mean the architectural division designated by the word, but the narrative of some episode connected with inmates past or present. I know mine has, and though it deals neither with a crime nor with any incident of a thrillingly sensational character, yet I think it worth the telling, and sit down to do so in a moment of leisure, with nothing of graver purpose to hinder me.

The house in question, occupied by me and mine, is situated in London. For obvious reasons I shall give no closer indications as to its exact position, but shall content myself with saying that I chose it some years ago on account of its vicinity to one of the Metropolitan Underground Railway stations, and the facilities which its site afforded for getting about comfortably and speedily from one end of the town to another. Being a business man, compelled by my commercial avocations to journey Citywards almost every day of my existence, I was naturally on the look-out for such a convenient residence, and literally snapped at it when I heard it was vacant and to let. I took it on a long lease, and have ever since been able to linger at least ten minutes longer over my breakfast of a morning, a luxury which a man of my years and somewhat lethargic habit of body appreciates keenly, I assure you.

The building is an old one. No stucco, swiftly 'run-up,' enterprising jobber's speculation ; but a good solid brick-and-mortar

edifice, reared with care, and meant to endure. A passing brewer's dray does not cause its stout walls to vibrate ; and if I have any pressing work to do at home in the evening, my eldest daughter can stumble over a Beethoven sonata in the next room as much as she pleases without in the least disturbing me. A roomy house, with good lofty ceilings, quaint high marble mantelpieces cunningly carved, and other indications of past glories. It was built, I should say, not only when George III. was king, but a young king too, and long before Fashion had dreamed of migrating so far west as Belgravia. Goodness knows what lords and ladies held their refined jinkies within its walls ; what wits said good things over a pinch of snuff or a dish of tea : it is not of them I have to speak. I am but a plain citizen, and it is enough for me that the house is a thoroughly comfortable one, suiting me and my pocket, and more than big enough to hold the whole posse of my olive-branches at such times when they all come home from school, and conspire together to remind me of my responsibilities as a father.

The event I am going to relate happened some three or four years after I had settled myself cosily in my new abode. I had returned one afternoon somewhat earlier than was my custom, for the purpose of celebrating my second boy's birthday, and sat at home in my easy-chair like Goldsmith's good old Vicar, surrounded by my

young hopefuls of both sexes. Unlike him, however—owing to the din of romping and chatter—I entertained serious doubts as to whether I should not have been better off had I continued single and only talked of population, instead of marrying and endeavouring to bring up a large family. Suddenly one of the children, who was at the window, attracted my attention by a remark.

‘O, do look!’ she said—it was Minnie, our youngest but one, who had not as yet overcome certain difficulties with regard to the pronouncing of her ‘r’s—‘do look at that old man in the stet! He’s just like old Father Cwithmas, and keeps looking up here!’

‘Where? where?’ said the rest, rushing to the window.

I myself—as great a baby as any of them—glanced out, and, to be sure, the little thing was right. There was an old gentleman to be seen; a very old gentleman, with a long snow-white beard, who stooped very much, and steadied his feeble gait by the aid of a stick. A real Father Christmas; but by no means a shabby one, for the black clothes he wore seemed to be in excellent condition. My house appeared to be the object of his attention, and he looked at it, hesitated, and then looked at it again.

‘He’s coming to the door!’ cried my little ones. ‘Father Christmas is coming to the door!’

‘Coming to the door!’ said I. ‘Good gracious, so he is! Who can he be, I wonder, and what can he want?’

He was too respectable and venerable for a tax-collector; and the manner in which he approached the entrance of the house showed apparent timidity and diffidence. Surely he was making some mistake; I did not know

him, and expected no strange visitors.

He knocked at the door, and I just peeped out of the dining-room, where we were sitting, impelled by a certain curiosity to learn what his motive might be in singling us out.

‘Does Mrs. Smith still live here?’ he asked the housemaid, who ran up to him.

‘Mrs. Smith, sir? No, there ain’t no such party living here.’

‘Ah, gone, as I supposed,’ I heard the old gentleman say, as though speaking to himself. ‘It is many years ago.’

There was a pause after this; and I could see that Mary, our girl, was doubtful as to what she should do next. The old gentleman did not seem disposed to go, but stood at the door, reflecting in silence.

‘Can I see the present owner of the house?’ he said at last. ‘Here is my card; I should desire, if it is convenient, a few minutes’ interview.’

So there was no mistake, after all. Father Christmas had marked us for his own. I looked at the card which the girl brought in to me, and read—*Count Pogliano, Brescia.*

‘Count Pogliano, Brescia?’ I thought to myself. ‘That sounds Italian. What can a count want with me?’ However, the movements of the old gentleman had excited some interest in me, so I decided upon seeing him.

‘Take him up-stairs to the drawing-room,’ I said to the girl. ‘I will be with him directly.’

I packed the children off to the nursery, and, having informed my wife of the strange visitor’s appearance, hurried up to wait upon him.

He had taken a seat, but rose on my entering, and bowed with grave courtesy. Face to face with

him, I saw a man who, when young, must have been strikingly handsome, and to whom age gave a singularly distinguished and patriarchal appearance. But for the stoop of his body, he would have been far above the average height of men; his nose was well cut and slightly aquiline, and his eyes had not lost their lustre. A truly venerable old gentleman, whom it was impossible to mistake for anything else except a gentleman.

'Pray be seated, sir,' I said, noticing that his great age—he looked over eighty to a certainty—made him rather feeble upon his legs.

He sat down again, and then glanced at me timidly, as though at a loss for suitable words with which to express his thoughts.

'I scarcely know how to explain my intrusion,' he began at last, speaking with a slight foreign accent, but otherwise perfectly clearly, and employing even well-chosen phrases. 'My reasons for disturbing you will, no doubt, seem strange.'

I nodded my head in silence, and waited for him to continue.

'The fact is—that I lived in this house many, many years ago—'

'Indeed, sir!' I put in, observing that the old gentleman was growing more than ever nervous and diffident.

'Yes, sir. A Mrs. Smith was the occupant at the time; but perhaps you have no knowledge of such a person?'

'No, sir, I cannot say I have,' I replied. 'My tenancy is quite of recent date—some three years and a half at most; and Smith was not the name of my predecessor.'

'Ah, just so; thank you. It is many years ago; and things alter more than men. To me it

seems but as though it were yesterday.'

He looked about him with a saddened gaze, and I could see that some of the recollections of his past moved him deeply.

'In what way can I serve you, sir?' I remarked, after a brief pause, desirous of bringing matters to some precise and business-like stage.

'That is exactly what it puzzles me to explain,' he answered, rousing himself from the half reverie into which he had fallen. 'The—the question is a delicate one—one purely of sentiment—I—I—scarcely—I hardly venture upon broaching it.'

But for his grave sad demeanour and the quiet courtesy of his manner, I should have been strongly disposed to consider my strange, foreign, noble visitor a lunatic who had by some means got astray from an asylum. Under the existing conditions, my perceptions led me to think that the old gentleman had some genuine and powerful motive for doing violence to his natural timidity, and bearding a Briton in his own castle.

'Well, sir,' I remarked, 'you will, of course, understand that unless you yourself choose to assist me a little, I—'

'Bear with me, sir, sir,' interrupted the old gentleman meekly. 'When you know all, you will not fail, I hope, to excuse my trespass upon your good-nature and patience. I am eighty-five years of age, and yet I have travelled all the way from Brescia for the sole purpose of visiting this house.'

'Indeed, sir!' I once more observed, at a loss for anything more original or fresh. 'You have come a long way.'

'Yes, it is a long journey for one so old as I am, is it not? But I could not make up my

mind to die in peace without seeing the place once more.'

Judging that this was all the old gentleman required, I gave him the opportunity of taking a good look round the room. To my disappointment, however, he seemed but little interested in the apartment where we were sitting, and continued fidgeting about uncomfortably.

'You will pardon my presumption,' he said nervously; 'but I am a little upset at finding the house changed into a private dwelling. It used not to be so in my time, but was let out into apartments to all comers.'

'Really, sir?' I began, not a little astonished at this turn of the conversation.

'Do not misunderstand me,' he resumed promptly, perceiving, no doubt, my look of amazement. 'What I mean, sir, is that this alteration of circumstances makes the request I am desirous of putting extremely awkward and delicate. Had Mrs. Smith or any ordinary lodging-house keeper been here still, I should not have experienced such reticence.'

'Pray do not distress yourself,' I said, seeing that the old gentleman was in reality a good deal put out. 'You need be under no very great ceremony with me. I am a plain man of business.'

'Thank you,' he replied, bowing with great courtesy. 'Your extreme kindness gives me confidence. Well, then, you must know that my object in coming here was to visit the rooms which are just over our heads—particularly the one at the back, looking on to the garden. Do I express myself clearly?

'Perfectly,' I answered. 'One of the rooms is occupied by myself and my wife; the other is my eldest daughter's bedroom.'

'Ah!' he said—his face, which

had suddenly grown almost joyful and animated for a second, falling considerably at the latter part of my statement—'I was sure my request would be an awkward one, sir.'

'Why, sir?' I asked. 'Do I understand you to mean that you wish to go up-stairs and see those two rooms?

'Exactly,' he exclaimed eagerly. 'I—I was bold enough to hope that you would grant me the favour.'

'Certainly, sir; nothing can be easier. Just one word to my wife, and I will return and show you myself to the rooms.'

I rose and moved towards the door.

'One more question,' he said, in a hesitating tone. 'Have there—have there been great changes made in the house?'

'Changes? In what way, sir?'

'Well—do you think the walls and—and the windows are much in the same state as they used to be years ago?'

'So far as I am able to say,' I answered, puzzled and surprised by this odd query, 'the house is pretty well what it must have been when it was first built. Of course, I need scarcely mention that the rooms have been painted, papered, and freshened up from time to time.'

'Ah, you say they have been painted, sir?' he asked anxiously.

'O dear, yes; I myself had the place done up from top to bottom before I came into it.'

'Thank you,' he answered regretfully, 'thank you. My questions no doubt seem strange to you; but I had my reasons for asking. I was indulging in a hope which I fear is vain.'

I then went down-stairs, and explained to my wife in a few words the result of my interview with the old gentleman.

'Good gracious! how extremely peculiar!' she exclaimed. 'And you don't mean to say, John, that you have been imprudent enough to leave him all alone in the drawing-room, with all my blue china and things lying about!'

'Don't be alarmed, my dear,' I answered, amused by her dismay. 'I will be responsible for his honesty. The china is perfectly safe with him.'

'Well, then, he must be a lunatic,' she replied, with a woman's logic. 'Who ever heard of a sane man coming into a respectable house, and making such a request?'

'I don't suppose he means any harm. He is very old and shaky, and has, no doubt, some sentimental reason for wishing to see the rooms. Surely there can be no great objections to my gratifying his wish.'

'But—I don't like the idea of strangers going up into the bed-rooms. Besides, how am I to be sure that Carry's room is particularly tidy? it isn't, as a rule, you know.'

'O, he won't pay any attention to such trifles; and I can't, out of common civility, refuse such a small thing to a man who has travelled such a distance.'

'Well, if you must take him, take him,' said my wife at last. 'Only, get rid of him as quickly as you can. The tea-things will be in presently; and the children will be so troublesome if you keep them waiting.'

Armed with my gray mare's grudgingly given consent, I rejoined the Count.

'Sir, I am entirely at your service,' I said. 'If you will please follow me, I will conduct you up-stairs.'

Visibly moved, the old gentleman rose in silence, bowed once more gravely as I opened the door

for him, and walked up slowly, under my escort, to the rooms on the next landing.

At his own request, we entered my daughter's chamber. It was a pleasant room, looking to the north and on to the garden, or rather a succession of gardens; for the space at the back was an open one, studded with fine trees of goodly growth, which, in the summer, when in leaf, presented a charmingly green and rural aspect—quite a cheering and refreshing view not often to be obtained from houses situated in such a dense and central district as ours. I glanced at the Count. The sight of the room caused so deep an emotion in him that I made haste to procure him a chair, lest he should fall.

He thanked me feebly.

'I daresay you are surprised,' he said, 'at the effect produced on me; but you must know that, forty years ago, I lived in this very room. My poor Teresa—my wife, sir—was with me, and died here. Our son Carlo was born here. He is also no more; he died the death of a brave man at Solferino, while fighting for the land of his forefathers. I am alone now in my old age, and this is all that remains to me of the past.'

It would be impossible for me to adequately describe the sad grave dignity with which he spoke—the broken voice, and the old gentleman's deeply sorrowful, yet resigned, attitude. I own that, though by nature not particularly impressionable or given to tenderness, I was myself moved by such utter and hopeless solitude. Desirous of respecting his honourable grief, I held my tongue.

'We were very poor,' he resumed dreamily; 'but we were young, full of hope, and rejoiced to have escaped a great danger.

I had been compromised as an intimate friend of Count Confalonieri—you may have heard of the great Italian patriot, sir?—and I was about to be arrested. A companion warned me, and I succeeded in escaping from the Austrian bloodhounds. I fled to England, and my fond Teresa followed me here to this house, to this very room, and shared my lot. My land, my estates, were all confiscated. Though absent, I was sentenced to death as a traitor to my country, and I had to struggle for daily bread as a teacher of languages. But we were happy, in spite of our poverty. When I came home, Teresa was waiting with a smile to receive me. In the summer, however poor we might be, that window-sill was gay with flowers; and those gardens, sir—those gardens, sir, were her particular delight. She gave them the name of Bosco Bello. All the birds knew her, and came to her and helped her to sing songs to our little Carlo. They are both dead, and the room is a good deal changed; but the gardens, the trees, are here still.'

The old Count's simple touching words caused strange sensations within me. He put the picture so vividly before me that I actually seemed to see him young again, in the company of a loving, and perhaps beautiful, woman, looking out on to the old smoke-stained trees, and deriving a little sweet comfort in exile from the sight.

'All is over now!' said the old gentleman, making an effort to control his feelings. 'My title, my riches, have long since been restored to me; but what are they to me? One more request, sir; I know I have been most selfishly intruding upon your time and privacy, but grant me yet one more

favour before I take my leave. May I look behind that shutter by the window?'

'That shutter!' said I, surprised.

'Yes,' he replied. 'It is sheer folly on my part, I know, after so many years have passed; but I still feel a mad hope in me to find something there that I remember well in the old days.'

'Look, by all means,' said I, a trifle suspicious that grief had preyed upon the old gentleman's mind, and that he was not perfectly sane.

He advanced, drew the folded shutter out with a trembling hand, and peered anxiously at the board or panel behind it.

'Look!' he exclaimed suddenly, with a kind of choky sob. 'It is still there! *Gran Dio!* it is still there!'

'What is still there?' I asked, approaching him.

He did not answer; he seemed to forget even my presence, and, falling upon his knees, began muttering to himself in Italian. I let him be, though rather curious to know what it was that interested him so much. What could he have discovered behind that old shutter? Not a jewel, or anything of intrinsic value, surely?

He got up again presently, having seemingly recovered himself, and looked at me, smiling a queer sad smile.

'Come, sir,' he said. 'Your painters have been neglectful of their work; in spite of the lapse of so many years, they have spared my poor Teresa's humble lines.'

At the Count's invitation, I lowered my head against the panel, and saw the cause of his emotion. In a corner, blackened by the dirt and dust of time, but still fairly decipherable, was a faint scribble in pencil, and in a

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THE LINES BEHIND THE SHUTTER.

Read the Story.

woman's hand. Two lines of verse, which ran thus:

'Benché un esule si scrisse,  
Teresa qui felice visse.'

13 Luglio 1829.\*

'She wrote them two months before she died!' said the old Count. 'The verses are poor, but they mean more to me than the most beautiful lines of Petrarcha. Her heart was in them. I am truly grateful to you for your courtesy and kindness. With your permission, I will now retire.'

'Sir,' said I, with a great sense of sympathy and pity for the old gentleman's forlorn condition, 'if you ever desire at any time to come here again, pray stand upon no ceremony. I shall be only too pleased to welcome you.'

I held out my hand, and he grasped it warmly.

'Thank you,' he answered; 'thank you. I hope to see you again—indeed, I have something more to ask of you; but not now, not now. I need rest, and I have wearied you quite enough.'

I pressed him to take some refreshment; but he declined my offers, and, with many repeated expressions of obligation, prepared to take his departure.

As I led him to the street-door, through the hall, two of my impish mischievous little ones put out their curly heads, and, giggling to themselves, as children will, called out in shrill audible voices, 'Father Cwithmas!'

The old gentleman turned round, saw them, and smiled benevolently. 'Your little children, sir?' he asked. 'What did they say? Did I hear them call me Father Christmas?'

'Do not pay any attention to

\* Freely translated:

'Although an exile here she wrote,  
Contented was Teresa's lot.'

13 July 1829.'

them,' I said, frowning portentously. 'They are exceedingly rude and ill-behaved.'

'Nay, nay, sir,' he replied. 'Father Christmas is a good name, it is a good name.' He approached them as they came out timidly one by one, and patted them gently on their cheeks and heads, saying a few kindly words, after which he took his leave, and disappeared, hobbling round the corner.

The next day a van drove up, and a vast package of elaborate toys of all sizes and description came to hand: and we knew the giver by means of a scrap of paper thrust into the parcel, on which the words, 'From Father Christmas,' were scrawled tremulously. The good old Count must have ransacked and bought up the whole of a toy emporium, and my children were, of course, in ecstasies of delight.

'How kind of him!' said my wife. 'Poor old gentleman! I hope you told him, John, that he would be welcome here as often as he pleases.'—N.B. Mark the change which had thus suddenly come over the spirit of her dream since the previous day, and draw from it a maxim: toys to the children the surest way to the mother's heart.

But to return to the Count. Faithful to his promise, I saw him once again in the flesh. He drove up one evening—three days after his first visit—and, when our preliminary greetings were over, I sounded him as to his desire to see once more the room in which the happiest period of his life had been spent.

To my astonishment he declined to trouble me. His pilgrimage had been accomplished, and he proposed returning to Italy in two or three days; but he had come to beg one more favour of me.

'It is my wish, if possible, to take that shutter back with me,' he said. 'I should like to close my eyes reading Teresa's lines.'

The clauses in my lease relating to 'fixtures' were of a sternly-defined character, and, as a practical man of business, I felt some hesitation as to my right of disposing of another person's property.

'You cannot grant my request?' he asked, observing my expression of doubt.

'Well, you see,' I said, 'so far as I am personally concerned there would be no difficulty at all, but I think the landlord ought to be consulted.'

'Ah, just so,' he remarked, and looked so chagrined that on a moment's reflection I felt myself justified in overcoming scruples, which, after all, were extremely absurd.

'Pooh!' I said. 'What does it matter? I have no reason to doubt that a cheerful consent would be given, and it is only a question of uselessly delaying your journey back. Come, I will take the responsibility on my own shoulders. The shutter can be easily replaced, and I will have it removed and sent to you by tomorrow.'

He shook my hands warmly, and, as I think, invoked a blessing upon me and mine in Italian.

The dusty board, on which the

faint lines were still preserved, was duly forwarded to Count Pogliano at his hotel. I myself never saw him again, but some two years after the event, when the incident of his visit was almost forgotten, a letter bearing an Italian postmark came, informing me of the old gentleman's death, and advising me that, in accordance with certain instructions contained in his will, I should be in receipt of some small tokens of his regard, which I was earnestly desired to accept. The said tokens reached me in due course: a marvellous piece of gold plate, the genuine workmanship of that cunning artificer, Benvenuto Cellini (to this day in my drawing-room, under a glass cover, and partly the admiration, partly the envy, of my friends); a host of curious and valuable trinkets—all family relics—for my wife and children; and a little beautifully-executed miniature portrait of the Contessa Teresa Pogliano, which I was begged to hang up, for so long as I remained in the house, in the little room where she herself had lived happily, and died.

There it is fixed at this moment, against the wall, and as near the window as possible; looking on to the old smoky trees, and greet Bosco Bello with a serene peaceful smile.

REGINALD BARNETT.

## THE PUDDING SAUCE OF ST. ALPHEGE'S.

A Word in due Season.

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BEFORE Jack Burlington went to Oxford he believed himself to be a person of very considerable importance in the social world. An only son, blessed with a plurality of sisters, who looked upon him as a second Daniel come to judgment, he naturally fell into little mistakes as to his value. So he considered that he was a personage, as it were.

It was not that his father's estate was large, for it was much the contrary; but his family had owned it for more than a century, and that, in these mushroom days, counts for something. What is the good of having had ancestors if the memory of them is not faithfully embalmed and preserved? So the whole Burlington family, men and women, lived as if the ghosts of the bewigged grandfathers and betreined grandmothers were perpetually requiring to be appeased by sacrifices of comfort and easy pleasure to the maintenance of the family dignity.

But when Jack went to St. Alphege's he found that no one there knew anything about the Burlingtions, the grand-aunt who had been lady-in-waiting to Queen Charlotte, or the old doctor who had felt the pulse of George IV.

Jack was not a fellow-commoner, for the ancestors had not left behind the wherewithal to constitute him one; and, for the first time in his life, he felt inclined to anathematise their memories when he found he had not an upper place in the dining-hall, but plied his knife and fork down below, where he could

reckon at least six men he considered to be eads.

It was a daily mortification seeing the dons and the fellow-commoners sit above him. His dinner was as the 'Amen' of Macbeth, and, though the cook of St. Alphege's was an artist of reputation, and men of other colleges spoke of him with mingled awe and envy, Burlington did not believe in the *chef*.

There was the famous pudding-sauce, for instance, that was a college tradition, said to have been invented by this cook, the secret of which he meant to carry to his grave with him. It used to be talked about at the lower tables; but no one there remembered that it had ever been served to any undergraduate lower than a fellow-commoner. Whenever an odour more appetising, more mysterious, more unexpected than another floated down to the second tables, the whisper ran round, 'It is the pudding-sauce.'

Burlington smarted under the indignity of his position. At Walton-in-the-Wold they would scarcely have believed it to be a fact that there was a pudding-sauce in the world considered to be too good for, beyond the deserts of, the heir to the paternal turnip-fields.

What though at the upper tables sat the coming marquises and the future dukes: at the lower were, peradventure, prime ministers, who could give or withhold stars and garters to these miserable aristocrats. Jack did not care about having a gold

tassel on his cap, rather despised it, and wrote home to his sisters that he looked upon it as mere millinery; but he was silent about the sauce. To his jealous imagination, the aristocrats bloated themselves increasingly day by day. Nectar and ambrosia are wholly inoffensive when so far removed from every-day life as only to be in poetry; but to be near and not allowed to taste brings them to be very sad prose.

The sauce was said to be like the sermon of the apocryphal parson in the anecdote-books that could be fitted to any text, for be the pudding rich or be it plain, the sauce of St. Alphege seemed always to accompany it suitably.

Burlington was poor as Job, but by no means so patient. Long after he had taken his degree and left college, and even attained to the dignity of a seat on the bench, with the personal liberty of poachers at his mercy, he remembered the sauce at St. Alphege's. He never recognised in the columns of the daily papers the name of one of those stuck-up fellow-commoners without remembering the sauce, and hating the fellow with thorough cordiality.

At last Fortune smiled on Jack—one big broad smile, from the lawyer of a distant cousin, who had been deservedly ignored for going into trade. Burlington was rich at last, and married a lady who also had ancestors, and, in her own person, had curtseyed to the Queen.

Yes, Jack Burlington was as rich as some, richer than others, who had sat at the upper tables and enjoyed the pudding-sauce at St. Alphege's.

Lady Cecily Burlington had domestic troubles after her marriage. She failed in one small detail of housekeeping—pudding-sauce. She hired cooks and dis-

missed them; she bought cookery-books and read them. The shelves of her boudoir showed a row of volumes, ranging chronologically from Mrs. Glasse to Miss Mary Hooper. In vain she commanded to each new domestic the study of these sacred volumes. Cooks are, above all domestics, closed to new convictions, and impossible to improve; so one after another left, saying 'she could live all her life with the master, but the mistress was the—'

Such was the injustice of the tribunal in the servants' hall. Meantime, it was not *Mrs. Caudle* who administered the curtain lecture.

'Desperation,' says Lord Beaconsfield, 'is sometimes as powerful an inspirer as genius.'

Griselda grew impatient.

'Cannot you go to your cook and buy the secret?' she said crossly, feeling that it was quite time to show temper. There are domestic crises in which a woman does well to be angry.

'If the man should die without revealing it, one more will be added to the list of lost arts.'

Then Mr. Burlington went to Oxford, on a mission less vague than that of Dr. Syntax setting out in search of the picturesque, but with expectations equally highly pitched.

He called upon the college cook, who received him affably, so much so that the question was immediately driven home, 'Would he sell the secret?'

The great man paused for a moment's reflection. He was about to retire upon a modest competence, the fruits of perquisites and industry. His three assistants were already in possession of the secret, so he might as well part with it for a gentle consideration.

'Sir,' he said, 'you will tell your wife, and she will tell her

cook. If your wife has sisters, be assured that they will speedily be instructed ; and if you have any of your own, it follows that my secret's preservation will only be a matter of days. I cannot take less than five pounds.'

Mr. Burlington trembled with eager joy, and separated the bank-note from the others with which it was folded in preparation for a much larger demand.

The cook was no less pleased at the crisp rustle of the note, and sitting down at his desk wrote and handed over the recipe.

No prodigal son was ever more joyfully received than was Mr. Burlington on his return home, for all his household knew the object of his journey. The cook had suspended the packing of her trunks, in order to get hold of the secret before she shook the dust off her feet against Lady Cecily's establishment. This was what the Oxford artist had written down :

' Beat half a pound of butter to a smooth cream ; add two ounces of pounded sugar ; stir in a glass of brandy, and mix all well together ; serve in a tureen made very hot, or poured over a pudding at its highest temperature.'

'N.B. The plates must be served so hot that handling them is a service of danger.'

'And is that all?' said Lady Cecily, when she read what the artist had written.

'And is that all?' said the cook, when she had had her audience, and, returning to her bedroom, slammed violently the lid of the trunk she had filled in readiness for departure. 'I would not demean myself to a recipe like that. The yolks and yolks of eggs I have wasted on that man ; and he knows no more what is a good sauce than he knows a good cook when he has her. Well, if I was the mistress, I—'

But Lady Cecily also rose to the occasion. Good or bad recipe, she had made up her mind to receive it with scorn. The manner in which she begged her husband to lock up the precious document, lest it should be lost, made an infelible impression upon Jack Burlington.

He was slow to accept defeat, but it came only too surely. They often afterwards had the veritable sauce at table ; but the master of the house failed to recognise it, and the mistress declined to admit that she had profited by the knowledge.

Jack Burlington made a great mistake, and one that he is never likely to recover ; for he actually paid five pounds to get rid of a pe<sup>re</sup> grievance by which he had managed to discipline his household. He has not succeeded in maintaining another, and Lady Cecily will never tolerate his lectures upon domestic matters again. The cook sends up whatever she pleases, and Jack does not dare to complain. Lady Cecily dispersed her library. She kept Miss Hooper's books, and bestowed the others upon the Sunday-school book-case. As the cottagers have very little to cook, and prefer to do that little in a barbarous way of their own, Mrs. Rundell, Mrs. Glasse, and all the other exploded authorities are excellently preserved, and their bindings look as fresh as the day they left the shelves of the boudoir.

When Lady Cecily is not present her husband hints to friends that the cook at St. Alphege's was scarcely a straightforward person, and not quite to be relied upon ; but he is cautious about saying much, for he does not think so highly of his wife's curtain lectures as he used to do of his own before he took that false step about the pudding-sauce of St. Alphege's.

C. DREW.

## HALF-HOURS WITH SOME FAMOUS AMBASSADORS.

### IX.

#### ALBERONI, CARDINAL AND ADVENTURER.

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FOR the originality of his conceptions, Cardinal Alberoni has not inaptly been compared with Ximenes and Richelieu ; but he differed in one important respect from those great diplomatists : he was unfortunate in the agents through whom and by whom he worked, and consequently his most ambitious schemes failed to come to fruition. But there are few characters in European history more deeply interesting or worthy of study than this wily and sombre Spanish statesman, and prince of the Roman Catholic Church. In the earlier part of the eighteenth century the Continent rang with his name ; and there was many a sovereign perplexed by the anxious question as to what move he might be expected to make next on the complex chessboard of the nations.

Julius Alberoni, who had the obscurest origin, was born in the city of Placentia, on the 30th of March 1664, or, according to some authorities, on the 5th of May of the same year. His father was a common gardener. Even as a boy, it was noticed that he would adopt any measures, however objectionable, to accomplish his ends. He attracted the attention of a parish priest, who taught him to read and write, and instructed him in the Latin tongue. Subsequently, through the influence of some Barnabite friars, he was appointed ringer of bells to the cathedral. Resolving to become an ecclesiastic, the future cardinal found dif-

ficulties in the way, for his life hitherto had not been quite immaculate ; but these only stimulated him the more, and in the end he triumphed. From this he progressed rapidly to the dignity of a canon.

It frequently happens that those persons who attain to high positions receive their first impetus from totally unforeseen and the most unlikely circumstances. It was so in the case of Alberoni. At the beginning of last century a war had broken out in Europe, which involved a great number of the continental States. The banks of the Po witnessed the earliest meeting of the rival forces, and the Duke de Vendôme was in command of the army of France. The Duke's secretary was one M. Campistron ; and this unlucky Frenchman had the misfortune to be robbed and stripped of his money and clothes by some ruffians, near the village in which Alberoni officiated. The ecclesiastic, hearing of the circumstance, took Campistron into his house, furnished him with clothes, and also gave him as much money as he could spare to help him on his way. This was the very best investment which Alberoni could have made, though he had little idea of it at the time. Campistron, grateful for the service which had been rendered him in his need, and strongly impressed in his benefactor's favour, both personally and intellectually, conveyed him to head-quarters, and intro-

duced him to M. de Vendôme. Louis XIV.'s commander took kindly to Alberoni, and saw that he could be of considerable service to the French army. His first commission, however, was such a one as a patriot of any country would scarcely care to undertake, though there is never any saying what an intriguing Spaniard might or might not do. Our hero, at any rate, was first employed in the not very elevating office of discovering where his own countrymen had concealed their grain, with the object of revealing these stores to the French. After this we are not surprised to learn that Alberoni found it alike prudent and convenient to depart from the scene of his heroic investigations. But having once obtained the ear of Marshal Vendôme, he was not the man to lose his advantages. He had a persuasive tongue, and was by no means deficient in ideas which would be likely to commend themselves to a man of the Duke de Vendôme's character. Accordingly, he had not enjoyed the patronage of the French commander long before he unfolded to him a proposition of some novelty and boldness. He suggested that the daughter of his (Alberoni's) sovereign, the Duke of Parma—for his parish was in the Duke's territories—should be united in marriage to the King of Spain. The proposal was favourably entertained; and the Princess was demanded in marriage by Philip V., the Spanish monarch. The Duke of Parma, of course, made no objection to so great and powerful an alliance for his daughter, and the arrangements for the union were completed. But the old proverb says, 'There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,' and there was even now some danger of the mis-

carriage of Alberoni's project. Just as the Princess was about to set out for her new country, the Spanish Ministers heard that she was of a haughty and domineering temper, and that she would be a very difficult subject to control. Royal marriages being sometimes merely formal matters, they prevailed upon the King to write to the Duke of Parma, requesting him to give another of his daughters to Philip, a princess who should be better tempered.

Now Alberoni saw at a glance that, for the furtherance of his ambitious schemes, there was all the difference in the world between a queen who had been negotiated for Spain by himself, and one with whom he had had no relations, and one who consequently owed him nothing. Alarmed for the safety of his plan, he took bold and instant action. The messenger who had been sent by the King of Spain to the Court of Parma, he caused to be arrested when one day's journey from that city; and he gave him the option of either delaying his journey to Parma for a day, or of being assassinated. The messenger, who was inclined to invoke a plague on both the houses of Spain and Parma, not unnaturally took that view of the situation which accorded with his personal safety, and decided to save his head. The result was that the Princess originally intended for Philip, and recommended by Alberoni, set out for Spain.

In the Court at Madrid the most bitter of the opponents of the King's marriage was the Princess d'Ursini, who had acquired great influence over Philip. This voluptuous woman was of French birth, her name being La Tremouille. While very young she had been married to Talley-

rand, Prince de Chalais. She was early left a widow, and her subsequent experiences were anything save of a virtuous character. Yet this bold designing woman at one time indulged the hope of becoming the King's consort herself! Finding, however, that the marriage with the Princess of Parma was resolved upon, she determined at once to assert her power over her new mistress. But her fall was decisive and complete. A contemporary historian furnishes the following description of this extraordinary scene: 'D'Ursini, whose bosom throbbed with the most eager and joyful expectations, went to Xadraque, a village where the Queen was expected to pass the night. She had put on a full dress of ceremony, and promised herself a most delightful evening. It was dark, and the Queen was not arrived. The weather was intensely cold. She ordered a good fire to be made in the best room in the inn, and sat down to supper. Scarcely had she sat down when the arrival of the Queen was announced. She went down-stairs to meet her, and followed her to the apartment prepared for her. The Queen treated her with marked coolness and indifference. D'Ursini, accustomed to a tone of authority with the late consort of Philip, was not a little surprised; but, ascribing her behaviour to her ignorance of the rank she occupied in the monarchy, resolved to let her know who she was, and accordingly began to animadvert on her slow mode of travelling, and the late hour at which she had arrived. The Queen angrily replied that such language did not become a subject. D'Ursini, no-wise dismayed, continued her censures, applying them next to the Queen's dress. The Queen ordered her to quit the room; on

her offering to remonstrate, she called aloud for the officer-in-waiting, and ordered him to get ready a coach and six, and not quit D'Ursini until she had reached the French frontier. D'Ursini would have disobeyed, declaring that nothing but an order from the King himself would oblige her. The officer then showed her the King's order, which had been secretly given to him, to execute whatever the Queen commanded, without exception or reserve.'

Philip was not such a fool as he looked, nor as he appeared in character to some who thought they read him. He had laid the train for the disgrace and banishment of D'Ursini, anxious to get rid of her, and to shake off her influence. The whole thing was arranged with the Queen, to whom he wrote, 'Be sure you do not miss your blow; give her but an hour, and you are her slave!' Without any apparent concert between the King and his bride, the end was successfully achieved. When the fallen woman arrived at St. Jean de Luz, where she was set at liberty, she thus appealed by letter to her old friend Madame de Maintenon: 'I am here in a small house, the ocean before me, sometimes calm, sometimes agitated—it is an image of what passes in courts. You know what has happened to me; I shall not implore in vain your generous compassion.' But the Maintenon did not see it, and failed to reply in that warm way which friendship would seem to indicate. Besides, D'Ursini had incurred the displeasure of the Court of Versailles on a variety of grounds, and her reception in France was very frigid in tone. She afterwards attached herself to the Court of the Pretender in Rome, and in the Eternal City she died.

Alberoni went out to Pampe-

Iuna to meet the Queen, but his reception was such as to have chilled most men. 'I have heard,' said her Majesty, 'that you are an egregious rascal.' The diplomatist did not deny the soft impeachment; he knew his *âle*. He simply bowed, but afterwards managed to flatter and conciliate the plain spoken Queen. In course of time he came to exercise great influence over her. Being alone in a strange land—for the ladies who had accompanied her had returned to Parma—she was driven for counsel to the wily ecclesiastic. He, of course, knew how to make the most of his position; and it seemed but the most natural thing in the world when he became Prime Minister.

But there was a still greater height to which Alberoni aspired, for so he regarded it, and that was the cardinalate. Though he knew the difficulties in his way, he worked for this most assiduously. There were passages in his career which he could not look back upon with complacency, and there was also his obscure origin to trouble him. If he could only obtain a cardinal's hat, he reasoned, nothing more would be heard of these unpleasant things. He had read the great lesson of the world in all ages, that nothing succeeds like success, while there is nothing so damaging as failure. In addition to other adverse forces working against him, he knew that the Pope viewed with the greatest distaste the possible necessity for his elevation to the College of Cardinals. But it says much for the indomitable energy of the man that he allowed nothing to divert him from his great object, or to discourage him in its pursuit. Events fortunately disposed themselves in his favour, as they had done on previous occasions. Turkey having made war against

Italy, the Pope implored succour from Spain. Some members of the Spanish Cabinet opposed this request, but Alberoni supported it with fervour; and ultimately six ships were despatched for the protection of Italy. In other matters in dispute between the Vatican and the Court of Spain itself, Alberoni gave way to the Pope, thus forging additional links in the chain which should bind Rome in gratitude to himself. Moreover, the Papal Nuncio at Madrid seconded the King and Queen in extolling the services of Alberoni, and at length the resolution of the Pope was broken down. The scheming Spaniard obtained his red hat.

Upon the death of the French king, Louis XIV., curious complications arose. The Duke of Orleans became Regent, and the throne was occupied by an infant. In the event of his death there might be two claimants one being the King of Spain, who had the proximity of blood in his favour. Although the Powers of Europe had exacted a promise from Philip that he would make no claim at any time to the crown of France, the latter now protested against the Duke of Orleans being preferred as Regent before himself. The Duke was aware of this, and contemplated an alliance with England, while foolishly coqueting at the same time with the Pretender. British Ministers were not only disquieted by the plots of the Jacobites, but by the naval preparations in the ports of Spain, made by the King and Alberoni. The lukewarmness of the French Regent drove England into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Emperor of Germany. The Duke of Orleans, being convinced at last that the family of Hanover was securely seated upon the throne of England, concluded

a treaty with her in 1717, to which the States-General became parties. Thus was constituted the Triple Alliance. The King of England was guaranteed against the Pretender, and the possible claims of the Duke of Orleans were sanctioned in return. Holland was a concurring party to the treaty.

Such was the condition of European politics when Alberoni began to conceive his grand schemes of aggression. He had at his command what was then considered to be a large army, consisting of twenty-two thousand horse and eighty thousand infantry. The navy was exceedingly weak; but Alberoni did all he could to revive it, and mustered sixty ships of the line, thirty frigates, and twenty galleys. Altogether these armaments were formidable, considering that in the year 1723 the entire population of Spain was only seven millions six hundred and twenty-five thousand souls. Financially, the State was at one period in a ruinous condition, as it has since frequently been; and on the accession of Philip the annual income was under half a million sterling. Alberoni formed large projects for increasing the wealth and commerce of Spain: 'He meditated the increase of the trade carried on between Acapulco and China, and the eastern regions of Asia, through the intervention of the Philippine Islands. Thus Spanish America would become a chain to bind together the Western and ancient worlds, in an intercourse of industry and exchange of riches. The commerce by Acapulco was confined to an annual ship, or at most a few vessels. In coming from the Philippines, the ship cannot stretch across by a direct course, but must proceed considerably northwards, in order

to fall in with the westerly winds that are to blow it over; so that, from the time it leaves the islands, it does not see land till it reaches the coast of California; and here there is no harbour which it can put into. Alberoni wished to have a diligent survey made of the Californian shores, in hopes of finding such a harbour. Nor did he stop here. He was anxious to have the immense unexplored tracts that stretch north and north-east admitted to a share of this Eastern traffic. Their rude produce was to be exchanged for the more fashioned and elegant productions of the East.' Such were some of the schemes which Alberoni formed for the commercial benefit of Spain. He also suggested many reforms and extensions of trade at home, which proved that, while his mind was bent on personal aggrandisement, he yet saw the great power which commercial prosperity conferred upon a nation.

Some of his financial and commercial schemes led to great disturbances in Biscay, Navarre, Arragon, and other places; but these he quelled with a firm hand by the aid of the military. Meanwhile the preparations for his formidable expedition were pushed forward, and a fleet, consisting of twelve ships of the line and a hundred transports, sailed from Barcelona. The squadron was commanded by the Marquis de Mari, and the Marquis de Léide was general of the forces. The Emperor of Germany, being at war with the Turks, had withdrawn most of his troops from Italy. Naples was the destination of some of the Spanish troops, and a good deal of predatory warfare was carried on in that State. But the expedition proper landed upon the island of Sardinia, and in the course of a month the whole island was in possession of the Spaniards.

It has been remarked, in connection with this expedition, that nothing could exceed the facility of the conquest but the insignificance of the object gained. Alberoni had startled the whole of Europe by his preparations, and yet apparently he had no definite object in view which warranted such a display. His conduct on this occasion would seem to have lacked reason most conspicuously. There was the trouble of the King's illness at home, when the Cardinal entered upon his quixotic enterprise; while the descent into Italy embittered still more against Alberoni his old enemy, the Pope. His whole policy appears to have been extremely short-sighted. But when the Pope talked of strong measures against Alberoni, of recalling his Nuncio from Madrid, Cardinal Aquaviva, the Spanish Minister, would terrify him on the other side by threatening him with an entire rupture with his Court, assuring him that no future Nuncio would be received in Spain. The Pope, in the agony of his embarrassment, burst into tears on one occasion, and declared he had certainly damned himself when he had created Alberoni a cardinal. Cardinal Giudice, who happened to be present, dryly said he would be happy to attend his Holiness anywhere but to hell.

The Pope, bitterly hating Alberoni as he did, perceived also the necessity for dissembling his feelings. But, relying on the canons of the Church, he did venture to refuse the Spanish Minister the archbishopric of Seville, then vacant; whereupon Alberoni flew into a terrible rage, and swore that the Pope, the Emperor, and even the King and Queen of Spain, should answer for it before God.

For the purpose of fostering his plans against Italy, the diplo-

matist now fomented discord between Turkey and Germany, in the hope that the latter would still be drawn off from her Italian enterprises. This led to so much indignation amongst the Roman populace that the person of Cardinal Aquaviva, the Spanish representative at the Vatican, was in great danger. An attempt was made by England to secure peace in the South of Europe, but Alberoni was completely given over to his ambitious projects. He incited the Czar and the King of Sweden to go to war with England; then, garrisoning Sardinia, his useless capture, he prepared a second expedition. He took soldiers wherever he could find them, including the most desperate bands of brigands, and he raised money in the best way he could. The people to a considerable extent responded to his dreams of conquest, and ultimately an imposing force was collected. Early in 1718, fifteen thousand foot and four thousand horse were encamped on the plains of Vic, ready to march to Barcelona, for the purpose of embarking.

By way of reply to these preparations the famous Quadruple Alliance was formed. In the first instance, the treaty was only signed by England and France, who saw that some decisive measures must be taken to insure the peace of Europe. The Emperor of Germany followed, and then the Duke of Savoy, who had held aloof as long as he could, seeing that the treaty was not so favourable to himself as he could have wished. Spain was invited to join in the treaty; but although she had more to gain from it, perhaps, than the other Powers, for a long time she resolutely declined to do so. France and England brought all their influence to bear upon the Spanish Court, but in vain.

Our envoy extraordinary, Colonel Stanhope, set out for Madrid to exercise his powers of persuasion; but long before his arrival the Spanish fleet had sailed from Barcelona.

Much speculation was indulged in as to the destination of Alberoni's second expedition, and ultimately it was found to be Sicily. There were in twenty-seven ships of the line and three hundred and forty transports, carrying an army of thirty thousand men. There was also an immense train of artillery, with quantities of ammunition, and abundance of every implement of war. When the expedition appeared off Sicily on the 1st of July 1718, and a disembarkation took place four leagues from Palermo, the Sicilians were overwhelmed with astonishment. The King ordered his ambassadors at all the Courts of Europe to make the strongest representations against this unexpected attack, which he described as contrary to all the usages of civilised nations. But these usages have ever been vaguely defined; and kings and statesmen have had no difficulty in riding rough-shod over them when they deemed it necessary. The King of Sicily's alarm was very natural, for he had but a small and miserable army. 'But the uniform answer to his representations was that, the arrangements of the Quadruple Alliance having been deemed necessary to the continuance of this peace, he had nothing to do but immediately to accede to them. So that this wily politician, after all his shiftings and wavering, found himself where he was at the beginning. Apprehensive of losing Sicily, and getting nothing for it, he notified his accession, and directed the governors of his towns in Sicily

to receive the imperial forces.' The Emperor of Germany now concluded peace with Turkey, and once more had his troops free for the war in Italy. The Spanish troops went forward with the conquest and occupation of Sicily; but while they were engaged in besieging Messina, the last of the towns to give way, the English fleet, under the command of Sir George Byng, came up with the Spanish fleet off the Faro. An engagement ensued, which resulted in the English fleet gaining a decisive victory.

While these events were in progress, Colonel Stanhope arrived in Madrid to prosecute his mission. 'He found the Cardinal arrogant; but he was not without hopes, at first, of bringing him to a reasonable disposition, when an express arrived from Cardinal Aquaviva, with the intelligence of the landing of the Spaniards in Sicily, and their triumphant progress from Palermo to Messina.' Alberoni was now nearly beside himself with joy. He imagined the speedy realisation of all his hopes, with the expulsion of the Germans from Italy. Under the influence of his excited feelings, his demands to Colonel Stanhope assumed extravagant proportions. He claimed for Spain the absolute sovereignty of Sicily and Sardinia; the children of the Queen were to assume possession, without any conditions whatsoever, of Parma, Placentia, and Tuscany. The German Emperor was to recall his troops, and the British fleet was to return to England. This programme, of course, considerably astonished Stanhope.

Alberoni was a man of a very violent temper; and it is stated that, when Colonel Stanhope showed him a list of the ships which Great Britain had sent against him in case he should per-

sist in disturbing the peace of Europe, the Cardinal snatched the paper out of the envoy's hands, and threw it on the ground in a great passion. According to one writer, indeed, he tore it into a thousand fragments; but Colonel Stanhope, nothing abashed, went on coolly with the thread of his conversation, which may be found reported in the continuation of Rapin's history.

Gathering from the attitude of the Spanish Minister that he was in nowise inclined for peace, Stanhope departed from Madrid, leaving a note behind him to the effect that if the King of Spain did not accept the treaty of Quadruple Alliance in three months, the allies would declare war against him, and that any attempted hostility during that time would be opposed by force of arms. While the defeat of his fleet must have discomposed the Cardinal, he carefully suppressed all knowledge of this; and he even had it proclaimed by beat of drum throughout Spain that no one should presume to speak of the discomfiture of the fleet. He pretended himself to be perfectly tranquil under every blow of adverse fortune; but, as has been well observed, 'that which at one time was cried up as magnanimity will appear deserving of a very different name when it is considered that all this unconcern was for dangers he never exposed himself to, and calamities others were condemned to endure.' We can be very calm when others are called upon to suffer.

The Cardinal, through his ambassador in London, endeavoured to sow disaffection against the English Ministry, and looked forward with hopefulness to the meeting of Parliament, as tending to serve his ends, by manifesting a strong feeling against the Ministry.

But although Walpole led the attack against them, and the Government were blamed in some quarters for their Spanish policy, a large majority in both Houses indorsed the Quadruple Alliance, and saw in it a sincere wish on the part of the King and his Ministers to preserve the tranquillity of Europe. They were likewise of opinion that the hostilities which ensued were rendered inevitable by the conduct of the Spanish Minister. Seeing the unexpected turn which affairs were taking in England, Alberoni pursued his plans with redoubled ardour, and further showed his animosity to England by ordering the British consuls at the ports to quit the kingdom. He next proceeded to make seizures of English property, and encouraged the fitting out of privateers against the English trade. This was too much for the Court of St. James's; and a formal declaration of war was made against Spain.

At this juncture there were great rejoicings in Madrid in consequence of the capitulation of Messina. Alberoni urged forward the Spanish troops in Sicily to further action; but in their attack upon Melazzo they were defeated. Subsequently the Spaniards gained a victory over the Imperialists; but the operations of the English admiral were more than a set-off against this.

But we must now notice the passage of arms between Alberoni and the Regent of France, the Duke of Orleans. These two diplomatists cordially hated each other, and the Regent actually carried on his intrigues against Spain in the very Court of Madrid itself. Alberoni, amazed at this attack upon him in his own quarters, resolved to retaliate in kind against the Duke, who was the

real founder of the Quadruple Alliance. He not only attempted to create discord in Paris, but he endeavoured to entice the best military men in France into the service of Spain. As soon as the Regent became aware of this, he forbade all French subjects to enter the naval or land service of Spain ; and, at the same time, he ordered all those who were engaged there to return. Driven to some retaliatory action, Alberoni adopted a favourite policy of his—that of disseminating writings and proclamations against the French Government. He even conceived the scheme of overturning the government of the Regent ; and, so great was his belief in his own powers, that he imagined he could readily accomplish this. The licentious habits of the Duke, and his daughter, the Duchess de Berri, had made them enemies in France, and the Cardinal relied on this fact to assist him in his plots. The French people, moreover—that is, the masses—were beginning to complain of the enormous sums which were spent by the Court in the pursuit of pleasure. Then there was a party in the State who complained of the French alliance with the house of Hanover, with the consequent desertion of the Pretender's interests, and the rupture with Spain. Altogether, to adopt a homely phrase, it can scarcely be wondered at that Alberoni believed he could make it warm for the Regent. The latter was also in a difficulty as regarded civil and religious legislation in France. But besides all this, the Regent had acquired the deadly animosity of the Duchess de Maine. The Duchess was of the family of Condé, and was married to one of the illegitimate offspring of Louis XIV. The late King had declared this son a prince of the

blood, thus rendering him capable of succeeding to the Crown, after the rest of the royal family. By his will, he committed to him also the care of the young King ; but, on the annulment of the will, this provision was abortive. In the year 1718 the Regent determined upon vigorous action in respect to the Duke de Maine. He deprived him of every prerogative which raised him above the other dukes and peers of France, and reduced him precisely to the same rank. Upon this fact being made known to her, the imperious Duchess exclaimed to her husband, ‘ Nothing, then, remains for me but the disgrace of having married you ! ’

Prince Cellamare, the Spanish ambassador in Paris, found in the Duchess a ready instrument to assist him with Alberoni's schemes. The two held many conferences together, and struck up a kind of plot, the leading item in which was the seizure of the person of the Regent and the transference of his authority to the King of Spain. But the conspirators were very unpractical, and made no provision for subduing resistance or obtaining a public force if necessary. Moreover, the spies of the Regent informed him of what was going forward ; and a seizure of letters was made, the documents obtained being of a very compromising nature against Cellamare. In the end the Prince was obliged to leave Paris ; but, on arriving in Spain, he was appointed Viceroy of Navarre, an act which proved that the Spanish Government indorsed his policy of conspiracy. The French Regent was of an easy-going disposition, and, where some would have beheaded their enemies, he was content merely with a temporary imprisonment for the Duke and Duchess of Maine.

Alberoni urged forward the confederacy of the King of Sweden and the Czar against Central Europe ; but his projects in this direction were cut short by the death of the King of Sweden, who was killed at the siege of Frederickstadt in December 1718. Yet this only arrested the plans of Alberoni for a few days. Early in the following year he again had the map of Europe before him, forming schemes in his active brain for changing all its salient features. He was the real power in Spain, the King having fallen into a very feeble and lethargic condition. The Queen affected to govern, but in reality it was the Cardinal who suggested and carried on all the machinations of Spanish policy. 'Intoxicated by his elevation,' we are told, 'he displayed the utmost haughtiness in his whole demeanour. The most distinguished noblemen he treated with airs of superiority. On the least contradiction he would break out into the most indecent transports of passion. He wished to have it thought that in his single person centred the whole administration of government. Insisting that affairs could not be carried on without inviolable secrecy, he kept them entirely to himself, not even disclosing them to the Queen. On no occasion did he take any one's advice. He directed all the foreign despatches, and every public communication, to be addressed immediately to himself. He gave notice at the same time that whoever deviated in the least degree from his orders should pay for his disobedience with his head.' With so much power, he might have done something ; but in desiring to carry out great ideas he seemed to be paralysed. Hence, at the most critical moments, 'instead of assuming the

attitude of a great war Minister, he confined himself to the expedients of a petty intriguer. He was busy in stirring up plots and insurrections ; he published addresses and manifestoes ; he attempted some trifling and ill-concerted diversions. He is said even to have instigated persons to the assassination of the Regent.' Examples are given of his trivial diplomatic occupations when he ought to have been engaged heart and soul in carrying out the schemes he had concocted, and which were gigantic enough in conception.

But he was at length brought face to face with the necessity for action. A French army was despatched against Spain, under the command of the Duke of Berwick. This was in April 1719 ; and the army passed the river Bidassoa, which separates the two kingdoms. Upon the advice of Colonel Stanhope, who was serving as a volunteer in the French army, Marshal Berwick made for the Puerto de Passages. Here there were ships and naval stores to the value of half a million sterling, and all this property was either captured or destroyed by the French. It is a great reflection upon Alberoni's military foresight that he had made no provision for defending these valuable stores. Instead of being prepared with an army to meet the French, he appears to have contented himself with an effort to sow disaffection amongst the French troops themselves. In this hope he was completely disappointed ; and the French pushed on to Fontarabia, which surrendered to them at the very moment that the Cardinal was dissuading Philip, his royal master, from placing himself at the head of his own troops and taking the field.

The war progressed rapidly, or rather the onward march of the French, as we should call it; and in a few months the whole province of Guipuzcoa was in the hands of the enemy. Marshal Berwick proceeded to carry the war into Catalonia; and these disastrous events led Philip to think that the Cardinal-Minister was not so infallible or powerful as he had been hitherto thought to believe.

With the advice of the Pope, Alberoni now set on foot a movement on behalf of the Pretender, who went to Madrid to consult the Cardinal. An expedition set sail from Cadiz, with the intention of taking up the Duke of Ormond, a leading supporter of the Pretender, at Corunna; but the greater portion of the fleet was scattered before it arrived at that place. Two frigates escaped; and these bore the Earls Marischal and Seaforth, the Marquis of Tullibardine, and some three hundred Spaniards to the coast of Scotland. They were easily defeated, however, by the English general, Wightman. Not only was this scheme cast to the winds, but others which followed in its train; and a British fleet under Lord Cobham completely disposed of the remains of the Spanish navy at Vigo. In addition to all these disappointments, Alberoni was further chagrined by the accession of the States-General to the Quadruple Alliance.

The time was now rapidly approaching for his fall. Every event at home and abroad was tending towards this end. 'The progress of the French arms made Philip tremble for his capital. Liberal terms of pacification were offered to him if he would sacrifice the obnoxious Minister. He had been already indisposed towards him, hearing the scandal of

his private life—the mistresses he kept; but had he been successful he might have shut his eyes to those offences. He was not so; and a variety of circumstances coöperated to his fall. He had rendered himself extremely odious to the people of Spain, who had been taught to believe he intended to assume the title of Cardinal Farnese, and claim relationship with the Queen. The clergy suspected him of a design to abridge their power and influence, and overturn the Inquisition.'

The first serious blow to the Cardinal was the loss of his influence over the Queen, said to have been effected by female influence, though the Court of Parma was credited with some share in this. The fact is that all classes in Spain, as well as the King and the Queen, saw that it was dangerous for him to be continued in power, and the uneasiness had spread to the sovereigns of neighbouring States. The Regent of France, however, was chiefly instrumental in his overthrow. The Duke had discovered all the secret designs of his enemy; and in his negotiations with King Philip he made it a *sine quâ non* that Alberoni should be banished from his councils and his kingdom. Philip issued the order, and left the capital, so that the Minister could make no personal appeals to him.

There is something strangely like the fall of our own Wolsey in that of Alberoni; and in both is taught the same lesson of the danger of 'vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself.' The Spanish Cardinal was ordered to quit the capital and the country, and had no option but to obey. He had not travelled far, however, when it was discovered that he 'was carrying out of the kingdom the celebrated will of Charles II.

of Spain, which gave that kingdom to its then sovereign. Persons were immediately despatched from Madrid to wrest this serious and important document from him, which it was supposed he intended to take to the Emperor of Germany, to ingratiate himself with him. With some violence they effected their purpose; and the Cardinal proceeded on his journey to the frontiers of France, where he had the additional mortification of being received by an officer sent by the Regent to conduct him through that kingdom, as a State prisoner. Unembarrassed, however, by this circumstance, Alberoni wrote to the Regent to offer him his services against Spain, but his Highness disdained to return any answer. The Cardinal must have fallen very low before he could offer his services to his bitterest foe, and manifest his willingness to betray his own sovereign and people.

These events occurred in 1720, and Alberoni now retired to Parma, where he remained in quietude for some time; but a Consistory was called at Rome to inquire into his conduct, and he was sentenced to be confined for one year in the Jesuit College at Rome. At the expiration of this period he returned to Parma, where he busied himself in measures for ecclesiastical education. In 1746 he proceeded to Rome, when he was made legate of Romana by Pope Clement XII. Six years later he died at Rome in his eighty-eighth year, in full possession of all his faculties, notwithstanding his great age.

A curious example of Alberoni's restless spirit is furnished during the time when he was legate of Romana, and when he had passed his eightieth year. Being desirous of subduing the little republic of San Marino, which was near his

own government, and of bringing it under the dominion of the Pope, he successfully intrigued with the leading inhabitants for this purpose. A day was fixed, upon which the Republicans were to take the oath of allegiance to their new sovereign; and at the time appointed the Cardinal rode up to the mountain with his suite. He was received at the door of the principal church by the priests and chief inhabitants of the place, and conducted to his seat under a canopy to hear high mass and a *Te Deum* sung. The mass began, singularly enough, with the word 'Libertas.' It was no sooner heard by the listeners than it had a magical effect upon them. Reflecting that they were possibly about to lose the reality of liberty, they fell upon the Cardinal and his attendants, drove them out of the church, and made them descend the very steep mountain of San Marino with great rapidity.

Voltaire at one time seems to have thought Alberoni a really great man. In his *Life of Charles XII.* he paid homage to his powers of mind, describing him as a great and commanding genius. But in his later historical work, the *Life of Louis XIV.*, the philosopher of Ferney regarded his former favourite with aversion, and spoke of him with derision and contumely. Voltaire knew how to change his course with the tide. The Cardinal's own countrymen, or rather those in the Spanish army, always held his memory in respect, and alleged that he had a real care for the greatness of his country, but that his foreign foes had compassed his fall.

In person Alberoni is described as having been low in stature, and inclined to be corpulent. The expression of his face was ignoble, though there was a good deal of vivacity in his eye. His manners

never wholly lost the coarseness and vulgarity which arose from his obscure origin. He was a sensualist and also a *bon vivant*; and Benedict XIV. once remarked, 'Alberoni is like a glutton, who, after having eaten a large salmon, cannot help casting a wistful eye at a minnow.' His selfishness was imported into all the relations of life; and when at the height of his greatness he lulled himself into a false security, living at the same

time a life of splendour and immorality which could not in the end fail to set the Spanish people against him. Disbelieving in the prospect of his own fall, he made no serious preparations against it. This made his overthrow all the easier. He was swept from the stage on which he had been the greatest actor in the same swift but effectual manner in which he had first risen to control the destinies of Spain.

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### VANISHING HOPE.

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On the golden sands I linger, while the breakers leap around,  
And the slanting fire of sunset makes the shore enchanted ground,  
And I watch the ships ride westward, to the far Atlantic bound.

In the glory they evanish, down the misty verge they flee,  
And 'Adieu, adieu!' I murmur to the murmur of the sea—  
It is evening on the ocean, it is evening with me.

O my hopes, my hopes auroral, ye that left me all too soon,  
In your early morning freshness, in your radiant summer noon,  
Left me lonely as the phantom of the lonely rising moon—

Like those ships I watch departing to the land beyond the sea;  
From the heart where ye were harboured even so departed ye.  
It is twilight on the ocean, it is twilight-time with me.

All my argosies white wingèd, with their freight of golden grain,  
High aspirings, bright illusions, I shall never know again,  
All a hundred fathom sunk beneath the melancholy main !

Safely riding in your haven—ah, what gallant hopes were ye!  
Hopes that failed to reach Atlantis, foundering in the vasty sea;  
Night is falling on the ocean, night is falling over me !

V. A.

## VALENTINA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'A FRENCH HEIRESS IN HER OWN CHATEAU,'  
'MRS. LANCASTER'S RIVAL,' ETC.

### CHAPTER XIX.

FRANK.

'HER extravagance is really awful,' said Lady Julia. 'I confess to you both that the responsibility is getting too much for me.'

'You are afraid of having a pauper on your hands again?' said Mr. Hartless languidly, from behind his newspaper.

'Perhaps not so bad as that, because she does not bet or play; but certainly she does her very best in other ways to get rid of her money—it melts, it runs away. I never saw anything like it.' And Lady Julia sighed; she was evidently very uneasy.

'At this moment,' she went on, as neither of her companions said anything, 'who can say what she may be doing? I should not be the least surprised if she turned Roman Catholic. Most ungrateful, after all I have sacrificed for her.'

'What, my dear?'

'Why, Robert, you know you have felt it yourself. Leaving Stoneycourt all this time deserted and going to the dogs, missing the London season and all the shooting, and a great deal besides; leading this foreign life, which I always dislike exceedingly, it reminds me so dreadfully of my stepmother. All to please this girl, who did not care an atom for her husband while he lived, and was supposed to break her heart when he died; and now respects his memory by squandering his

money right and left, and being twice as wild as she ever was before. You may laugh, Robert. I have no doubt you and Frank enjoy looking on at it all. It amuses you; but women are different, and the charge of a creature that nobody can manage is enough to turn one's hair gray.'

'What makes you so bitter this afternoon?' said Mr. Hartless. 'Where is she now?'

'She is gone to that convent she was talking of last night. Her mother used to go into retreat there sometimes, and took Val with her, which she had no business to do. Did not you hear her saying that she was afraid the nuns were poor? O, it is exactly the same as in Italy, encouraging all those monks and nuns in their dirt and selfishness.'

'It is an amiable kind of extravagance,' said Frank, looking up and speaking for the first time.

'Well, Frank, she ought to be obliged to you; you always defend her. But if you had been with us all the time I think you would have agreed with me. You certainly have been a most constant friend to her, and I am sure she has not deserved it.'

Her husband put down his newspaper, smiling.

'Constancy is a virtue of Frank's,' he said. 'He still looks upon you as Val's guardian, Julia, and he wonders whether you will be more encouraging now than you were once upon a time.'

'O, isn't it rather soon?' said Lady Julia.

Of course, the idea was not in the least a new or surprising one. She and her husband had talked it over many times, and had been quite aware all along that they were sacrificing themselves in Frank's interest. But this was the first time that a talk on the subject had been more than *tête-à-tête*.

'No particular use in losing time,' said Mr Hartless. 'Val is no longer broken-hearted.'

'Not a year! What is to-day? The 14th of June,' said Lady Julia. 'He doesn't want to settle it at once, surely. Do you, Frank?'

'I mean to be tremendously cautious,' answered her brother-in-law. 'I shall say nothing till I am quite sure of the answer. But you have no objection?'

'O no. Poor Val! You will take very good care of her, I know.'

'You may depend on that,' said Frank.

Soon after this he went out, leaving the husband and wife together. They were now in Paris once more, having come there from Florence within the last fortnight. The Roman winter and the Tuscan spring had passed quickly. Valentina had for most of the time been gentle and manageable, except in the matter of spending her money. Frank Hartless had gone backwards and forwards between England and Italy, had looked on calmly at her extravagances—even encouraged her in them; had abetted her wildest pranks, when in the spring she began to be her old self and a good deal more, feeling herself so perfectly free and independent.

Their present plan was to go to Homburg or some other German place for the rest of the summer, and possibly back to England in

September. That, of course, depended on Valentina's fancy. The whims of a widowed sister with twelve thousand a year were not to be disregarded. Valentina had no longer to complain of unkindness from her relations.

'After all, I don't know what Val will say to Frank,' said Lady Julia doubtfully.

'He will have his way in the end,' observed Mr. Hartless. 'Having been disappointed once will make him all the more determined now. I could tell you something rather amusing.' He smiled, and looked out of the window.

'Well, what is it? I shall be glad to be amused. About Frank?'

'You will be shocked; but I suppose I can trust you, as we both mean her to marry him.'

'Well, it would be such a good thing for everybody. Frank has so much decision; he will keep poor Val in order. Of course, if only they had had sixpence between them, he would always have made a better husband for her than poor Billy Golding. Tell me, then; I won't be shocked.'

'Frank's opinion of himself agrees with yours, oddly enough. One day, when he was in town in the spring, some fellow at the club was talking about Val and her pranks, and chaffing Frank about her. They all knew, of course, that she had refused him. Frank got rather warm on the subject, and made a bet with this fellow that he would marry her within the year, and that no one would ever hear any more of her pranks. She is to be tamed, once Master Frank marries her, and to sink into nothingness, like other respectable women.'

Lady Julia was slightly scandalised.

'How little we know what

horrid men say about us,' she observed. 'Who told you?'

'It came to my ears,' Mr. Hartless answered. 'I didn't see it in *Truth*, though I dare say it will be found there with the announcement of the marriage.'

'She has brought it on herself,' moralised Lady Julia. 'I have told her so before now. People who behave as she does must expect to be talked about. It was odd of Frank, though. You would never have done such a thing.'

'Possibly not. But Frank is so free and easy with other people that he must expect them to take liberties with him. I don't always admire his jokes myself. But no doubt marriage will tame him as well as his wife. By the bye, did I ever observe to you that Frank must have said something rather strong to Roger Miles, to send him off like a shot from Visieux that day?'

'There was some excuse,' said Lady Julia. 'Frank knew very well, as I did, that Roger Miles was one of Val's admirers. I never shall forget the poor fellow's face, when I told him of her engagement to Billy. I feel convinced that he came that day intending to propose to her. O, he was a very good riddance. Dear me, we might have had him hanging on all the winter.'

'I agree with you. The end justified the means.'

'That's a bad sentiment, isn't it? Jesuitical. But you feel sure, don't you, Robert, that Frank is really fond of Val? He won't make her unhappy?'

It was not Mr. Hartless's way to be sure of anything.

'It is rather late in the day to suggest that he is not fond of her,' he said, with a lazy smile. 'He has been more or less in love with her for at least three years, and

she has done everything in the world to enrage him. All in vain; his feelings are as lively as ever.'

'But that bet?'

'I wish I had not told you. Of course he was chaffed into that by other fellows. If he wins it, what can be better! A first-rate match for Frank, and Val turned into a quiet member of society. I shall be truly thankful. If there is one product of civilisation I hate, it is a wild young woman.'

Lady Julia fanned herself, and looked thoughtful.

'Consider,' Mr. Hartless went on, 'she is certain to marry again. If not Frank, the first adventurer who gets round her. She has no eye for character; she is simply guided by the absurd fancy of the moment. Another miserable specimen like Golding, perhaps. Or in a fit of repentance for her follies, she might accept a serious young man, such as Roger Miles. Think how bored she would be in a week. Now, Frank is as wilful and as lively as herself, and has a temper and a will of his own. They may fight a little at first, very likely, but she will have to give in, and then there will be peace.'

'O yes, I know all that. I quite agree with you,' said Lady Julia.

While his brother and sister were discussing his prospects, Frank Hartless was walking along the Boulevards, looking forward to the happy accident of meeting Valentina. He did not take much notice of the people who passed him, but kept his eyes well in front. As he had often remarked, one knew Lady Val a mile off by her shoulders.

Frank was not at all a handsome man; his features were plain, and he wore no hair on his face to hide them. But he had a good figure, and looked like a gentleman. He had also what is called a clever face, with quick dark

eyes, a continually changing expression, and a mouth and chin of immense determination. He could look very pleasant or very forbidding, having two kinds of smile for the purpose, one with his teeth, the other with his eyes. Whether he was pleased or angry, he always smiled; and he had a quick, careless, off-hand manner, which was sometimes mistaken for frankness. Still he was not by any means made of ice, like his brother, and could be in very fiery earnest, for which reason many people liked him better than Robert. It was his fashion to be cool and satirical, but not his character. Old Starr the coachman used to say that Mr. Frank never gave in, and never forgave. He was certainly a good hater, and appearances seem to say that he was a good lover too. For, to do him justice, without inquiring farther into his motives, he would have been just as much bent on marrying Lady Val if William Golding had left her penniless.

He had not gone very far along the boulevard when he saw her, not a mile off, but close to him. She and her maid Laurette were just coming out of a silversmith's shop, whose glittering windows extended for many yards along the pavement. Valentina looked pleased, and was smiling on the obsequious man who opened the door for her. Frank stood outside and waited.

'There you are!' she said in her brightest manner; it seemed that she was in a mood of friendliness to all mankind. 'Come in here. I want to show you some things I have been choosing for a wedding-present.'

'Who is the happy receiver?' said Frank, following her back into the shop.

'Do you remember that pretty girl at Florence—Miss Lanyon,

the old clergyman's daughter? Well, she confided in me. She had been engaged for years to her cousin. He was a poor curate, and, in fact, they had not enough to marry on. I told her I very well remembered being poor myself, and how unpleasant it was, and I promised that her cousin should have that living when old Mr. Smith retires in the autumn. I wrote to Mr. Carleton about it. And I heard from her this morning that she is going to be married in September. So, don't you see, I have to get something for her.'

Lady Valentina said all this in English, very fast, while the shopman stood by respectfully. It was all news to Frank, and he was not particularly pleased to hear it, having long had an eye on old Mr. Smith's excellent living for a friend of his own. He now wished that he had made Billy promise it long ago. He had hardly given Valentina credit for knowing that she had a living in her gift, and certainly would never have suspected her of understanding the Benefices Resignation Act. Her independence was quite provoking. Billy had left everything entirely in her hands, without a trustee or a guard of any sort. She had only to give her orders to Mr. Carleton, and things were done like lightning.

Frank did not show his feelings, however. He smiled and said, 'But, my dear Lady Generous, the living is a fine wedding present in itself.'

'Nonsense; I should have to give it to somebody. Look here.'

Frank looked, and beheld all the plate that could possibly be wanted in a rectory house with a good income, according to Lady Val's own ideas, which were not small. She made the man show

him everything, laughing over it herself like a pleased child.

'Do you mean that to be the general style of your presents to your friends?' Frank said presently.

'When they are poor.'

'Then it will be a privilege to be poor, and to know you. There is only one danger.'

'What can that be? That they won't like to accept it?'

'No danger at all in that quarter. That your purse may not turn out to be inexhaustible.'

Lady Val stood still for a moment. Her smile went away, and she looked at him with grave sorrowful eyes.

'It will last as long as I want it,' she said.

Frank did not argue with her. They went out of the shop, and turned along the boulevard towards the hotel.

'O, do you know,' she said in her usual manner, 'I have had such a disappointment this afternoon. My Augustine ladies—I could not find them anywhere. I am sure the convent used to be at the end of a passage—Passage Miraflor. You went past a great many shops, and came out into a nice green place where the gates were. That part of Paris must be altered in these few years. I am so sorry.'

'What were you going to do at the convent? Not take the veil, I hope.'

'No, I am not good enough. Besides, Julia tells me that I am a Protestant. I don't quite see how I can be that, when mamma was Catholic—but, in truth, no one ever took much pains to teach me religion. The only religious person I ever cared for was the Mother of that convent. How good she was to me! I wish you would help me to find it. At least, I might go into retreat there

for a week, if they would take me.'

This new whim struck Frank as decidedly serious.

'Ah! and do you know what will be the end of that?' he said. 'These nuns—they may be excellent women, and may think they are doing right. But once they have got you, depend upon it their object will be to keep you. If I find this convent for you, I shall be acting against the interests of all your friends.'

'Still if you can do it, I am sure you will,' said Lady Val, looking up into his face. 'At least, I suppose you care for my wishes, don't you?'

'You judge me fairly there, at any rate,' said Frank.

'And I believe you know where the convent is quite well. We are walking away from it. Come!'

She turned round suddenly, saying to the startled Laurette, who was following them, 'Monsieur is going to take us to the convent.'

Frank did not actually oppose this idea; he had, at any rate, no objection to their walk together being lengthened as much as she pleased. He confessed in a gradual sort of way, as they went along the boulevard, that he knew the Passage Miraflor; there was a good glove-shop there; that he remembered the green space beyond, and finally the convent gates themselves.

'Still, I should be doing very wrong if I took you there,' he said, after delighting Valentina with his good memory. 'The cleverness of those people is astounding. And you are so young, and so impulsively generous, I am afraid—'

'Don't treat me like a child. I am not young at all. And you do them injustice; they are very good women. If I offered them

my whole fortune this afternoon, I don't believe they would take it, so set your mind at rest on that point. I should still have something left to buy presents for my friends.'

Frank was not inclined to joke now. He looked very earnest and grave.

'Talk about my doing injustice!' he said. 'You never did believe in my good intentions, did you? and I suppose you never will. It is a great trouble. I dare not speak to you, for fear of being misunderstood. I might talk till doomsday, for instance, without convincing you that I don't care an atom what you do with your money. As for this Mother Superior of yours not accepting your whole fortune when you kindly offer it—well, I hope for your own sake you are right. But as long as you yourself don't go and be buried there, I care nothing about it.'

Valentina certainly was not so flighty as she had been in former days when Frank tried to remonstrate with her. Perhaps he had learned lessons since then, and was doing it more cleverly. Anyhow she answered quite softly and sweetly,

'There is not much danger of that, I think.'

'Yes, there is. I know very well how you feel about everything. You hate society; it is all a blank to you. If it was not for the power of being good to your fellow-creatures, you would not care to stay in the world at all. Inside those gates—O, hang it, I know how it will be,' said Mr. Frank, striking his stick sharply against the pavement. 'Peace, and a pretty garden, and singing hymns, and being pitied and loved in a nice quiet way by good women with calm smiling faces. Don't you fancy it is just

the life to suit you at this moment?'

'Well,' she said in a low voice, 'if you knew what it was to feel so tired of everything—to want something new—'

'Exactly; and so you are planning to establish yourself in a place where, from year's end to year's end, there never can be anything new. Let us turn back, if you please. At least, I won't be instrumental in taking you there.'

'What a fuss about nothing!' said Lady Val, looking at him in surprise. 'I don't mean either to endow the convent or to enter it. I only want to go and see my poor old ladies once again, and, perhaps, arrange to stay a few days, if I like them. You can't wish to hinder me from having a little innocent pleasure like that. No, I will not turn back. I think you are very silly and tiresome.'

'Well,' said Frank, 'of course no mortal man can prevent you from having your own way. If you wished to shut yourself up in a lunatic asylum, I should have to take you to the gate. But I vow I won't do this, unless you make me three promises, meaning to keep them, mind.'

'I do keep my promises, now,' said Lady Val. 'I am not so changeable as when I was a child. What are they?'

'First, that you won't stay at the convent to-day more than half an hour, having compassion on me, who will be waiting outside.'

'O, certainly,' she said, smiling; 'I know you are very impatient.'

'Next, that if you do go into retreat there, which I disapprove of heartily, you will come out at the end of a week.'

'Why should I promise that?'

'For your friends' sake. And

because it is a condition of your going there now.'

'I forgot. Very well.'

'And third, if you find convent life suits you so well that you decide to take to it altogether—why, then, that you will stay in the world at least till you are five-and-twenty.'

'By that time I might have changed my mind.'

'You might,' said Frank, hiding a smile. 'Let us hope so. But after all, you haven't any fancy for the life, have you? So it can't do you any harm to make me that promise.'

'Five and twenty. More than three years. If I like it, why should I wait so long?'

'Let me remind you,' said Frank, 'that the Passage Mirafiori is at present undiscovered country.'

'Dear me! I wish I had found it for myself. Very well. I won't become a nun till I am five-and-twenty—if then.'

'If then,' Frank echoed with satisfaction. 'To your left. Here we are.'

## CHAPTER XX.

### MOUNTAINS.

VALENTINA kept her first promise, and her second too. The nuns welcomed her so affectionately, for her mother's sake and her own, that she determined to carry out her idea of spending a week at the convent. Her sister Julia was terribly shocked and vexed; she now regarded it as certain that Val would end her days as a nun. She thought it most ungrateful and heartless of Val; the maddest and worst of all her pranks. Nothing was too bad for the wicked deceitful nuns who had entrapped her. In fact, to Lady Julia this was a much

more serious trouble than her brother-in-law's death, and she could not understand the behaviour of Robert and Frank, who as Englishmen and Protestants might have been expected to oppose such a plan with all their power. Lady Julia became sarcastic in her indignation, and congratulated Robert on this new development in Frank's prospects. Robert only smiled and yawned, and observed that Frank knew what he was about.

This assurance seemed necessary; for Frank appeared to be doing all he could to smooth Val's path to the convent. He took her side in arguments, said nothing against the Augustine ladies, spoke respectfully of the Pope. Lady Julia could only suppose that he meant to become a Roman Catholic too.

Valentina went to the convent, and at the end of a week rejoined her relations at their hotel. She was in high spirits, and did not seem at all aware of the coldness with which Julia received her. That evening Robert Hartless took the trouble of advising his wife to consider the whole thing past and over, and to forget that the convent existed.

'That is not so easy,' said Lady Julia. 'We shall soon hear of her going back, and being received, and taking the veil. Neither you nor Frank seem to realise the danger in the least.'

'We realise all that there is,' answered Mr. Hartless quietly. 'It may comfort you to hear that Val has promised Frank to stay in the world till she is five and twenty.'

'Promised Frank! This sounded so odd that Lady Julia took two or three minutes to think it over. 'Really!' she exclaimed, 'Frank must have a good deal of influence. More than I thought.'

'I told you he knew what he was about,' said Robert, with his lazy smile.

Paris, though still beautiful, was beginning to be very hot, and they found it pleasant to have their coffee after dinner in the great shady courtyard of the hotel, among the myrtles and orange-trees. There they sat till the lamps were lit everywhere, and up in a dark blue square of sky the stars were shining. Their party had been very dull for the last week without Valentina, who, in any of her moods, was always a centre of interest. Lady Julia had been in a state of dignified crossness, meant to show her companions how weakly and badly she thought they had behaved. Robert had been sleepy and indifferent, and Frank, if he was there at all, thoughtful and silent. It was a stupid group altogether.

But to-night everything was changed. That little conversation with her husband before dinner had improved Lady Julia's temper, though she still thought Val had behaved wrongly and ungratefully to herself. But she was softening every moment as she listened to Val's sweet voice, to her low merry laugh, and saw the smiles and looks that were passing between her and Frank, as he tried to make her confess that the convent was a horrid bore, and the nuns stupid inane women, who thought of nothing but needlework and jams.

'No, they are dears. We loved each other very much. I never was so petted before,' Valentina declared. 'But O, the want of space and fresh air! I feel as if I had been packed in a box; and at this moment I should like to run as far as Fontainebleau.'

'All right. Which will be there first, you or I?' said Frank.

He was at his best that evening,

so animated as to be almost good-looking. He had his little triumph, but did not show it disagreeably. Valentina could only feel flattered by his cordial welcome back into the world.

'Julia,' she said, leaning back, and looking over her shoulder at her sister, 'I suppose we can get away from here the day after tomorrow?

'So soon! Where do you want to go to?' said Lady Julia in a little consternation, and even Frank gave a small whistle, and Robert looked up from his *Times*.

'I must go to Switzerland,' said Valentina. 'I feel a longing to climb mountains. I would go to-morrow, only you lazy people would not be ready to go with me. But Wednesday will give you plenty of time for all your arrangements.'

'Climb mountains! What an idea in this weather!' said Lady Julia dismally.

'The mountains would be better later on,' suggested Frank confidentially.

'When they swarm with tourists; thank you. No; I mean to do it thoroughly. It struck me one day this week, at dinner, when they were reading the *Life of Ste. Françoise de Chantal*, that I had never given mountaineering a fair trial.'

'The Alpine Club will rejoice,' said Frank. 'What was the connection with Ste. Françoise?'

'O, she was tiresome, and my thoughts began to wander. I have never ceased thinking of it since. It is settled, isn't it? We start on Wednesday. Where are Murray and Bradshaw?'

'Don't be in such a hurry,' said Lady Julia. 'We can't go on Wednesday, you know. There is the review on Sunday. I thought you all wanted to see that. I am

sure Frank does, for I heard him say so.'

But Valentina was quite decided that she could not wait till after Sunday. She did not care for the review; she wanted fresh air. In fact she was as wilful as she had been in her naughtiest days, and declared that, if no one chose to go with her on Wednesday, she would go by herself. Now, it was true that Frank had particularly wished to see the review. He liked to see and know everything, and was a little curious as to how they managed these things in France. It seemed as if he might find it rather hard work to submit in this instance. His brother and sister both looked at him to see what he would do.

'What a tyrant you are!' he said to Valentina, smiling agreeably. 'You absolutely won't let us stay for the review!'

'Of course you can do as you please,' she answered. 'I shall find guides and people to take care of me, no doubt.'

Frank looked at her for a moment without speaking. Perhaps he measured his power, and found it still a little wanting. He very discreetly gave in at once, shrugging his shoulders.

'Yes, you have a giant's strength,' he said. 'Do you mean to go on all your life using it like a giant?'

'Nonsense!' said Valentina, half-turning from him with an impatient movement, like a pettish child. 'I want to go away. I can't stay here all those days with nothing to do. I think a review is the most tiresome thing in the world; and you have seen hundreds. However, if you like it, pray stay for it. You can all join me in Switzerland next week, unless you are afraid of the mountains, and would rather go back to England.'

'A dissolution of partnership; that sounds serious,' said Frank.

'I don't care. There is no fun in being with people who are so slow, and won't do anything amusing.'

'Cruelty, blindness, unreasonableness, your name is woman,' said Frank, still gazing at her, and smiling. 'You know we are all your slaves; what can you want more? Perish reviews! Do you pretend not to know that this one was given up ten minutes ago, as soon as you pronounced against it? Robert has been thinking of the route, and Julia of her new gowns, which have not come home, and I of Mont Blanc and the Righi—not without trembling. You will promise not to push me into a crevasse?'

'I don't know. It depends whether you tease me. Mont Blanc and the Righi! They are not half difficult enough, are they?'

'I know nothing about them,' answered Frank. 'We must ask for the most dangerous mountains; especially those which female foot has never climbed. There's one thought that makes me miserable.'

'What is that?'

'Your complexion.'

'O, that does not matter to anyone but myself.'

Frank did not argue this point, except by looking and laughing.

'Well, have you two people settled anything?' said Lady Julia, who had been watching their confidences from a little distance.

'Everything,' said Frank. 'The caravan starts for Geneva on Wednesday morning.'

'I am sure you are most obliging, Frank. Val ought to be very grateful. I must send to Madame Caspar to-morrow morning. She won't have time; however, the things can be sent after me.'

' You are just as obliging as I am ' said Frank.

Valentina did not take the trouble to thank either of them.

A man could hardly have a more difficult part to play than Frank Hartless had during the next few weeks. He was not naturally very adventurous, liking streets much better than mountains ; and, though he had plenty of courage, it is not easy for a man well over thirty to change all his habits, and become as active as a lad of eighteen. Roger Miles, who with all his quiet ways was much more of an athlete, would have made a better mountain companion for a daring young woman like Valentina.

Frank did not enjoy roughing it ; he could not bear getting up before sunrise ; the tremendous walks and irregular meals, which Val with all her delicate looks enjoyed immensely, were purgatory to him. His brother knew this very well, and could not resist offering satirical condolences.

' The game is worth the candle,' was Frank's answer ; and his brother watched the progress of events with deepening amusement. Sometimes, when Frank gave in cheerfully to some specially preposterous notion of Lady Val's, he could not help reflecting that this young person was adding up a fine score against herself. Once she was his wife, the self-sacrificing Frank was likely to take a very different tone.

Mr. Hartless did not breathe these suspicions to his wife, whose love for her sister, though it might have been more still, naturally exceeded his. He was not in truth very fond of Valentina ; for, like other quiet indifferent men of his kind, he had a great idea of his own importance. And his excellent memory often brought

back to him Valentina's little insolences in days gone by, the scornful glances that she took no pains to hide, her disrespect, her ignorance of his wishes and opinions, even when she was living as a guest in his house. Since Billy's death and the reconciliation, it was true that her manners had been much better, otherwise it would have been hardly possible to dance attendance on her for so long. But now she seemed to be breaking out again, and her brother-in-law thought with some satisfaction of the taming that was to follow.

It would not be easy to say what Valentina's thoughts were in these days, as she drifted through them. Probably she did not think much of the future at all. There was always something in her way of living like that of Nature's gentle beings of another creation. If her surroundings were happy and bright, she rejoiced in the sunshine ; if they were sad, she was too miserable to live. She had never been trained like a reasoning creature ; the instincts and influences of the moment were her laws. There could not be a sadder spectacle than such a life as hers, in some of its aspects, and yet its naturalness was beautiful. The stream flowed along in its own wild way, but it was clear and sweet ; there were no dark depths in it ; the blue sky was reflected in it purely. It laughed and danced in the sunshine with all its heart, and when the clouds gathered and the wind blew, it took dark colours too, and shivered and moaned.

In these days Valentina was happy among the mountains. The beauty and courage of the young English lady will long be remembered among the guides, and yet they speak of her with a sort of pity : even they could see

very well that there was something wanting in her life. Robert and Julie were kind, and ready to go anywhere. Frank was always to be depended on. Valentina had learnt in the last months to go to him with all her fancies. If she ever reflected at all, she thought that Frank was very much improved. He never used in old days to be so polite and kind. Once, perhaps, it struck her as fortunate that Frank had forgotten all that nonsense three years ago. And it may have occurred to her to wonder what made Frank so much nicer now than he was then. But she did not trouble herself to think much about it, and when the crisis came it found her honestly unprepared.

One day she was very much annoyed. They were staying in a romantic village near the shore of a small lake, and had been enjoying one or two glaciars in the neighbourhood, when Robert Hartless announced that he must go home for the shooting early in September. He was sorry if it did not suit Valentina, but one's home duties could not be entirely thrown to the winds. He hoped she would not dislike coming to Stoneycourt for a time. Of course, if she preferred staying abroad, some arrangement could be made. He would advise her to look out for some lady as a companion. But Julie would be very sorry to part with her, and it would be much the best way for her to come home with them.

Valentina was extremely disturbed, and behaved as usual childishly. She looked down, shrugging her shoulders, and did not speak for a minute or two. Breakfast was just over, in the noon heat of an August day. Valentina got up, took her shady hat, and walked towards the door.

Frank and Julie looked at her, and Robert took no notice.

'I wish you had no shooting,' she said, turning round at the door. 'I don't mean to go back to England, now or ever, and most certainly I shall not have a lady to keep me in order. I shall stay here for another month, and when you are all gone I shall set off to Greece, Egypt, and Constantinople, and Jerusalem, and then Damascus, and then I shall go and live among the Arabs in the desert, and ride about all day long.'

She ended with an odd little smile. They all listened to her gravely.

'Nonsense, Val! Come here and be serious,' said Lady Julia.

She shook her head, went out, and shut the door.

Lady Julia was beginning to exclaim, but her husband, after a moment of silence, turned to his brother.

'*Carpe diem*,' he said.

Frank nodded slightly, and went out almost directly afterwards.

'Really, Robert, how ill-mannered, to talk Latin before me!' complained Lady Julia. 'What did that mean, may I ask?'

'That girls like Valentina ought not to be allowed to wander alone in tourist-haunted valleys. Is that enough?'

'Too much, for you only said two words.'

'Nevertheless, they signified even more than that. The Latin language is very comprehensive.'

'So it seems. Dear me, how troublesome Val is! Will she go back with us, do you think?'

'How can I tell? All I know is that you and I will be back at Stoneycourt early in September.'

Frank knew pretty well where to look for Valentina. Behind the little primitive hotel a path

went climbing up the side of the valley, through the dark tall pine-trees that covered all the slope.

At a high point in this path there was a rustic bench, and here one might sit and look down through the deep shade of the wood to the lake, glittering white and blue in the sunshine, and then away along the green sides of the valley to where a range of snow peaks, changing every hour to some new wonder of brilliancy, stood clear against the deep blue of the sky.

They had been a few days at this little Sternensee—Lake of Stars, as its name was—and each day, in coming back from long rambles, Valentina used to stop and rest here. She had said once or twice that she loved the quiet view, and could never be tired of looking at those peaks, with one or two of which she had already made closer acquaintance. Frank did not keep to the path when he went that day to look for her, but climbed up through the trees, and found her, as he expected, sitting there in her gray mountain dress, with her shady hat and alpenstock beside her, and a troubled look in her face.

'Did you think I had run away?' she said, as Frank came up.

'Started for Greece, yes; but I thought you would make your first halt here.'

'But isn't it enraging, to be forced back to England, to that stupid dreadful Stoneycourt! I have no wish ever to see it again. It would make me too miserable. I am quite serious, you know. I want to go about the world and have plenty of adventures.' Then, as Frank, who was standing by her, made no answer at once, she leaned forward and looked up in his face. 'Can't you help me?' she said.

'I wish I could,' said Frank, in an odd sort of voice. 'I feel with you entirely. It is far too delightful, travelling about like this, for me to like the thoughts of going back to England. But these fellows with land, you see, they are always such selfish rascals. The British Constitution would be in danger if their shooting did not come off in proper time.'

'What do I care for the British Constitution?'

'Precisely. Or I?'

'And how could Robert talk of my having a lady to go about with me? It would drive me mad. And, besides, one would think I was an unmarried girl.' She paused, flushing a little, then went on rather quickly. 'There is only one thing for me to do, to become perfectly independent. Don't you see that? I can't exactly say it to Robert and Julia, because they have been very good to me, and have given up all this time. It has really been so good of them. I daresay Robert was dying to be in England all last winter. But I can't be joined on to them for ever, as if we were one family—can I? They must go their way, and I must go mine. When I have been all over the East, perhaps I may come and see them in England. But not now; there are many, many reasons. I can't go to Stoneycourt now. Why don't you give me your opinion?'

'Because it will break my heart to part from you,' said Frank, deliberately.

It was not exactly an answer to her question, but it did quite as well. He was not looking at her; he was standing beside her, gazing down the valley, and after he had spoken he still stood just the same. He was putting a restraint on himself; there was

none of the violent eagerness which once upon a time had made her run away from him.

'I want you to be happy,' he went on, as she said nothing. 'You don't want to go back to England—neither certainly do I—for it is only life to me where you are. If you will consent, we will let these people go, and I will take care of you.'

This time she made some sort of answer. 'You forget—' she began, but so low that he hardly caught the words. However, she was not vanishing into the woods, as he had feared and expected. He ventured to look at her, and saw that she was stooping slightly forward, looking very grave, her eyes downcast and her cheeks flushed. This nymph, or fairy, or whatever she was, looked wonderfully human.

'I don't forget anything,' said Frank. 'I am not afraid of remembering anything. I don't ask you to give me all I give you—it would be impossible. But you are alone—not fit to be alone—and I ask you to trust yourself to me. Don't you think I could make you happy, dear Valentina?'

'O, but I remember so many things,' sighed Valentina. Then she looked up at him, with her eyes full of tears. 'I think I am very much surprised, Frank. I think I ought to ask somebody's advice.'

'Whose advice, my darling? Your sister's? Nothing could delight her and Robert more.'

'I suppose so. I was not thinking of them,' said Val, in the most natural manner possible.

'Whose then? Who has a right to give you advice! I can only think of one enemy I might have.'

'Who?'

'Carleton. He might call me a few names, I daresay.'

'It is not his affair at all,' said Valentina.

'Nobody's affair but yours, as far as I know,' said Frank.

He had an undefined feeling that he was accepted, but it still seemed as well to be cautious; this prize was not of a tame nature, and might be seized at any moment with a wish to escape.

So Frank was very patient, very moderate. He did not say much more about himself, but he sat down by her and talked to her of all her fancies, of the free happy life they two could lead abroad, while Robert and Julia were gone back to their muddy acres. At last, when it seemed as well to come to a clear understanding, he said to her in a low quiet voice,

'Then you will?'

She looked up among the pines with sad dreamy eyes, not answering at once; but she did not snatch away her hand when he gently took it in his.

'Am not I very unnatural and changeable?' she said. 'I feel almost as if it was wrong, and yet I am so lonely.'

'Never lonely any more,' murmured Frank. 'I will take care of you.'

Presently she asked him if he was not very much changed?

'I never used to know you were like this,' she said; 'I used to be afraid of you.'

'Let us hope you know me better now than you ever did before,' said Frank. 'I am not changed. I daresay I have seemed a sulky fellow, but that may be explained by a want of happiness.'

'Frank, do you know what people mean by being in love?' asked this extraordinary girl after a long pause.

'Yes; remarkably well.'

'How funny! I don't.'

'You shall learn by example,

dearest—the best way of teaching.'

'All that is no use. I was born without a heart, I believe. I like people very much when they are kind to me, but I can't understand those things one reads about. It is my French blood, perhaps. *Mariages de convenance* are the only ones I can really understand.'

Frank thought for a minute about the past and the present. Poor Billy Golding might very well have been the subject of a *mariage de convenance*, but how about himself?

'Then how do you explain your consenting to marry me?' he asked her.

'That sort of marriage need not always mean money, need it?' she said absently.

With all his coolness Frank was mortified.

'Thank you, dearest,' he said. 'You accept me because you want a courier. It is not flattering to a man's vanity; but I would rather be tolerated on those terms than not at all.'

He was passing it off with a laugh, but there was a tone of vexation in his voice, which reminded Val what very odd things she was saying.

She turned to him with the greatest sweetness, and said, 'Forgive me, Frank. I am very rude and wicked and ungrateful. But you must not misunderstand me. I only mean that you must not expect—what I have not got to give you.'

'Whatever you give me, I am the most fortunate man living,' said Frank; and so it appeared that he and Val quite understood each other.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### TOO LATE AGAIN.

ROGER MILES had spent most of that summer in Norway, boating and fishing with his old friend Harry West and one or two other young men. Now and then he wrote a few cheerful lines to his mother, who wrote back to him with any local news she had to tell. Early in August she told him that Mary Linton had been to see her, and had brought some news of the Stoneycourt people. They were all coming back for the shooting in September. 'Mary seemed to think that this would interest you,' said Mrs. Miles. 'I did not tell her that she was not likely to meet you at any of the Stoneycourt gaieties.'

This letter was several days on the road, and reached Roger, in the out-of-the-way place which was his farthest point, on the anniversary of William Golding's death. From various scraps of news he had picked up from Mary, it had seemed to him that Valentina must have pretty well recovered from the shock of her husband's death. He could understand that her grief, though very violent, might not be very lasting. Now he supposed she was coming back to Stoneycourt, and he began to wonder whether some happy chance would give him a meeting. He thought of it sadly, being very well aware that they had better not meet; it could only be a renewal of old sorrows for them both; and yet the longing to see her was all the stronger in Roger's heart, because he had been trying honestly to drive away the old dreams which would come tormenting him.

After this he was restlessly eager to get home, and as soon as his friends were ready they set off, and travelled back by way of

Hamburg. They stayed there one night, and Roger dreamed a dream which he remembered and told his mother afterwards; it was such a strange coincidence. He dreamed that he had a letter from Valentina, from some place abroad, telling him that she was alone, and asking him to come to her, to help her, and bring her back to England. He thought he set off and travelled night and day till he reached her. He found her very ill, lying on a sofa, thin and wasted almost beyond recognition. But she held out her hand and said she had always wanted him; why did he not come long ago? And then a door opened, and Billy came in, walking with a stick, and stood at the head of the sofa. So it seemed that she was not alone after all.

Sea and sunshine relieved Roger from the sad impression of the dream. He thought probably she was cheerful and well, and not wasting a thought on her old acquaintance; but she was in his mind when he got home, when he went into the library, after a long talk with his mother, and found a pile of letters lying there. Most of them had come within the last week or two, during which Roger and his friends had been moving about so constantly, that it was not worth while to forward them. He turned them over carelessly; most of them were business letters and circulars. But there was one which he took up and held in his hand, staring at it as people do, while his heart seemed literally to stand still, and then to rush on again at a pace that sent a quick flush to his forehead. A small thin letter from France, directed in a childish uneven hand that he had seen before. Valentina had been carelessly educated, and her writing was disgraceful.

Roger opened the letter slowly,

and took out a little sheet of note-paper with a few lines on it, written ten days before from a hotel in Paris.

'Dear Mr. Miles,—I should like to think that I have your good wishes. Do not call me cold and forgetful, but I have promised to marry Frank Hartless. I am not very much surprised; are you? But he is much nicer than you and I used to think, and you must not be anxious about me. I write because I know that you were always good and true and friendly, and I deserved all the hard things you may have thought of me. Do not give me up or forget me. We are to be married very soon, because my sister is in a hurry to go back to England. Do not blame me, please. I told you I could not live alone.

'Always your friend,  
'VALENTINA GOLDING.'

Poor Roger! the news seemed at first to crush all the manliness out of him. His mother, coming into the room soon afterwards, found him in a terrible state, exclaiming, 'This is too much! I can't bear this! Mother, read that. Did you know? What shall I do? I shall shoot myself!'

Mrs. Miles was very sorry, and the letter brought tears to her eyes; yet nothing that Lady Valentina did would have surprised her much. It seemed at first impossible to scold Roger or reason with him. But she could not bear to see him in this state of wild despair, and as she stood at the foot of the sofa where he had thrown himself, stern words came to her lips.

'Roger, I am ashamed to see my son crushed like this by a foolish woman's letter. Where is all your moral courage gone? You bore her first engagement like a

man. You have always known that she did not care for you ; what did you expect ? Hold up your head ; you shock me more than I can say. Shoot yourself, indeed ! I did not know you were such a coward.'

' That is what I have been always,' said Roger, starting up. ' A fool and a coward. I have let everything slip through my fingers. That brute deserves his success, for he has been resolute. But she will be miserable.'

' She has chosen for herself.'

' Do you think so from that letter ? I think her heart misgives her, as it well may. I shall go to Paris to-night, and she may choose between me and him.'

' O, nonsense, nonsense ! You are out of your senses.'

' No, mother. I don't mean to lose my last chance, that's all.'

He hurried out of the room. Mrs. Miles followed, reasoning, entreating, commanding ; he listened to nothing. Half an hour later the amazed coachman was driving him back to the station to catch the London train.

Early the next day, after spending the hours of the journey in learning the letter by heart, and becoming more and more fortified in his resolution, Roger Miles, looking indeed a worn and bronzed traveller, turned into the courtyard of the hotel in Paris, and asked at the office for Lady Valentina Golding.

' Numéro 26,' said the man glibly ; then, as Roger was half turning away, ' Ah, pardon monsieur, the lady is gone. Is it not she who was married yesterday ?'

Roger looked vaguely round him ; somehow he had never thought of being too late. He made the clerk no answer, but stood still, and only after a minute or two became aware, by the movements of that object, that he

was staring hard at a slim well-dressed gentleman, who was standing a few yards off smoking a cigar, and regarding him with no little amusement. Then Roger knew that the object was Robert Hartless, and came to his senses.

Mr. Hartless shook hands with him, and asked him if he was staying in the hotel.

' Just come, I suppose ?'

' Just come, yes,' said Roger.

' Can't they take you in ? The place is very full.'

' No ; I don't want to stay here. I have business ; I am only passing through. Is Lady Julia quite well ? Are you coming to Stoney-court ? I heard something of it, but I have been in Norway all the summer.'

' Ah, that's a long way off. Do they give you anything to eat in those countries ?'

' Charming country.'

' Well, yes ; my wife and I think of going home next week. The responsibility that kept us abroad has arranged itself, very pleasantly for us all. Perhaps you have heard. My poor sister-in-law has consoled herself by taking a fancy to my brother.'

' I heard — is it over ? are they —'

' You think such things tragical ; so they are,' said Robert Hartless, smiling. ' They were turned off yesterday, at that wretched Rue d'Aguesseau Chapel — a depressing place to begin their double existence in. They are gone to Homburg for a week or two — Hôtel Sainte Marie. Are you likely to be passing that way ?'

' No. I am going back to England.'

' Off already ! Come in and see Lady Julia, and have breakfast with us. When did we meet last ? To be sure — at that unfortunate place, Visieux. What a

sad *fiasco*! Poor Billy! You liked him, I think?

Roger muttered something about 'Very much—good-bye—late for the train,' and abruptly left him standing in the courtyard.

It seemed to him, in his dismal journey back again, that he himself was as bad as any of these people. Only a year ago Billy Golding had been saying his last words to him; and now, poor fellow, he was worse than forgotten—remembered in a tone of heartless contempt! Nothing that was his had followed him—not even, as Roger told himself reproachfully, the faithfulness of an old friend. However, he did not altogether regret that he had gone to Paris. It was the last leaping up of the flame which must now die down for ever; and when he reached home his mother found that he was quite calm again.

It was not till two or three days after, when he could entirely trust himself, that he answered Valentina's letter. He wrote a few kind friendly lines, wishing her happiness, and simply telling her how it was that her letter had reached him so lately. He did not mention Frank, or his hurried journey to Paris. If she ever heard of Hartless's seeing him there, she would only think that he came back that way from Norway.

His letter was not exactly an answer to Valentina's. It could hardly be that, with the chance of Frank Hartless reading it. But she was pleased with it, and on the same day that she received it she wrote to him again. Having addressed the letter, she left it on her table to be posted later, and went out. Not long after her husband came into the room, and saw the letter lying there.

It had not yet occurred to his

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wife to hide anything from him. There too, thrown down with her other letters, was Roger's note, which she had answered on the impulse of the moment. Frank, after standing by the table for a minute or two with a frowning face, took up that note and read it. Then he took up his wife's letter, which was fastened down, and turned it round in his fingers.

'Correspondence!' he muttered. 'This must be subject to supervision, my lady.'

Then, without any more hesitation, he tore open the letter and read it.

'I was very glad to have your few lines this morning,' Valentina wrote to Roger, 'for your long silence made me fear that you could not forget or forgive. At least I knew you would not forget, but I was afraid you had felt obliged to give up our old friendship. You must not do that, because I value it so much. I will make you smile rather grimly by telling you that I never am in Paris without thinking of a certain adventure of mine many years ago. What a naughty child I was then! I know you think I am not much better now, though you are too stiff and polite to say so. You always used to do as I asked you, and now I want you to forget all my wretched behaviour last year, which I dare not remember. And you must promise, whatever you hear of me, to believe that I am always the same, and that whenever I want to be good I think of you. I suppose I am happier than I have any right to be; but I hope I shall never forget to be good. Homberg is a horrid place; we shall not stay here long. Good-bye. Does your mother remember me? Do you ever see dear little Dick

KK

Starr, or the Cradocks at the mill? My memory is dreadful to-day. It is your letter's fault. I sometimes wish I had none.—Yours most truly, V. H.'

Perhaps it was natural enough that Valentina's husband should not quite approve of such a letter as this, in which she opened her heart so freely to a comparative stranger.

'By Jove, this is a nice answer to a dry little stick of a letter like his!' meditated Frank. 'I wonder what she wrote to him before? This girl is a greater riddle than I thought; but one thing is quite clear—this style of thing must be nipped in the bud.'

He stood thinking for a minute or two, glancing over the letter again. He was in fact more amused than enraged, being quite clever enough to understand Valentina. This was only one among the proceedings that he meant to put a stop to; and it seemed a good opportunity to begin exercising his authority. They had been married a week, and he had not yet shown her that he meant to be master in the household.

As he stood there, with the letter in his hand, the door opened behind him, and Valentina came in. She was singing a little song to herself, as she often did; but she broke it off suddenly.

'What is that, Frank—my letter?' She came close up to him, and tried to take it out of his hand. 'I thought I fastened it down,' she said, half-playfully. 'Why, Frank, what business have you?—give it me!'

'In this shape,' said Frank; and, looking her straight in the face, he deliberately tore the letter into four strips, and laid them down on the table.

Her eyes flashed as she re-

turned his gaze, and she became very white. Then she turned away with a proud air, saying very low,

'I do not know what you mean.'

'Does it want explanation?' said Frank. 'It simply means this, that I prefer your not bestowing your sentimental recollections on Mr. Roger Miles.'

'What long words! I prefer that you should behave like a gentleman; for I did fasten my letter, and I could not have imagined that any one existed who would open and read a letter without leave.'

'It has not come within your experience, I daresay,' said Frank, smiling. 'It never struck you, probably, that your letters belong to me as much as yourself.'

'I don't belong to you.'

Frank lifted his eyebrows, and made no answer.

'What do you mean me to understand by tearing up that letter?'

'Must I tell you again? I mean that you are not to correspond with Mr. Roger Miles.'

'O, indeed! Why not? I shall correspond with any one I please.'

'You will find yourself mistaken; at least, if you write the letters, I shall read them, and shall reserve the liberty of tearing them up. Your letters to Mr. Miles I shall always tear up.'

'But why?'

It was more a little cry of astonishment than of anger.

'My reasons are my own affair. One is that I hate the fellow.'

'You hate him! He is twice as good as you are.'

'That is more than probable; but what a pity you did not find it out a little sooner.'

'You will beg my pardon for that, Frank, or I will never speak to you again.'

'Very well, my dear. I do beg your pardon,' said Frank, who saw that he had gone an inch too far. 'Only oblige me by attending to my wishes in this matter.'

'I shall do exactly as I please.'

Frank shrugged his shoulders, and walked out of the room.

Valentina stood in the little darkened *salon*, with its smart satin furniture, looking down at her torn letter, while a band in the public gardens not far off was playing that wonderful march of the *Swans* in *Lohengrin*. As Frank had been more amused than enraged by her proceeding, so she was more astonished than enraged or alarmed by his. An attempt to deprive her of her liberty seemed so ridiculous, so unheard of. Frank must have a lesson that would not encourage him to repeat it. He had certainly behaved very badly. She now supposed—the idea striking her for the first time, with real amusement—that he had always been jealous of her friendship with poor dear old Mr. Miles. It was too absurd. He must be teased, he must be punished; for she did not mean to forgive him directly, though she assured herself he would be penitent. He must be shown that such interference as his only made matters worse.

So Lady Valentina took the four strips of her letter to Roger Miles, folded them together, and put them into an envelope, adding to them a fifth strip, on which she wrote—'Good-bye. Do not write to me again. I shall send you something to keep for my sake.'

She sent the letter to the post at once, by the hands of her faithful Aurélie. She did not wish to risk Frank's pouncing on it again. Then she was very busy with her maids for some time, directing

the packing of a flat box, which was to be sent off by railway.

Frank knew nothing of all this when she went out with him into the gardens later in the afternoon. She was looking brighter and lovelier than usual, and was very animated; apparently she had forgotten all about the letter.

'Was there ever such a will-o'-the-wisp?' thought Frank, as he abated the dignified air which had been meant to show his displeasure. 'How distractingly pretty she is, and quite manageable, too. One has only to be a little firm with her.'

His heart was softened towards her, and he began to feel quite cheerful and contented as they strolled about under the trees, the air filled with lovely music. Then she turned to him, her eyes full of smiling mischief, and said suddenly,

'Frank, you remember that picture of me that was done in Rome? The one you did not like, and called *La Dolorosa*.'

'Didn't I like it? I did, though, and I always wished that you would give it to me. Where is it now?'

'That is a difficult question. I can't tell you exactly. Somewhere on the railway between here and England.'

'My dear girl, I hate riddles,' said Frank, with a short laugh. 'What have you been doing now?'

'Don't speak in that tyrannical tone of voice, as if I was always doing wrong. Perhaps you will tell me I could not do as I liked with the picture; but it is too late for any nonsense of that sort, my friend. I have sent it to Mr. Miles, to make amends for the torn letter.'

Frank's face darkened, and for a minute or two he said nothing. Then he laughed again.

'A capital idea! And you wrote him another letter, even more friendly than the first.'

'No,' said Valentina, 'that would have been too much trouble. I sent him the torn one.'

'You did! You are an original person.'

'I did not tell him that you had torn it; he may guess that. I added a line to say that he had better not write to me again.'

'That was weak,' said Frank; 'you should not have done that. You should have said, "Write to me once a week, and I will answer you with equal regularity. My husband shall never read either your letters or mine." You have not studied the part thoroughly yet, Val. You don't know how to be a really bad wife.'

'I am not—I don't want to be a bad wife,' said Valentina in an odd childish voice.

'A good wife obeys her husband,' said Frank with a high moral air, at which she began to laugh a little.

'A good husband obeys his wife,' said she. 'No, I don't mean that, but you must really let me please myself. It is my nature to please myself. I can't alter my nature.'

'It is not nature, it is habit,' argued Frank. 'Bad habits must be reformed, so you had better begin at once. Don't flatter yourself that you can have more liberty than other people.'

'I don't know about other people. I only know that I must do as I like. The more disagreeable you are, the worse I shall be. You are very angry with me to-day. Another day I shall be much worse, and in time you will be tired of being angry.'

'Angry!' laughed Frank. 'I am not angry, my dear, far from it. Your little performances have

not yet had that desired effect. They are only absurd. When you *do* make me angry you will see the difference.'

'What fun! I hope it will be soon,' said Valentina.

'Does it not strike you that we are making fools of ourselves?' said Frank, tired of the argument.

'Speak for yourself, dear friend,' said Valentina gently. 'Have not you felt that all the afternoon?'

Frank let the subject drop, and did not openly resent this last speech of hers. He thought he had kept his temper wonderfully throughout the whole affair. It seemed wise to begin thus, in leniency and moderation; his wife must learn by degrees that he was in earnest, and not to be trifled with. At present, hard as he was by nature, he could not be very hard with her; the attraction was still too strong. Her manner, that mixture of indifference and sweetness so entirely her own, made him hate and adore her by turns; and in these early days adoration was the strongest feeling of the two. He could afford, he thought, to be patient, for he meant to have the victory in the end. The adventure of the torn letter had not, certainly, ended very well for him. He learned from it that he must manage a little differently in future. The grasp must go on tightening by degrees, till herself, her correspondence, her friends, her expenses, all were in his hands entirely. Then, Mr. Frank Hartless thought, he should be satisfied.

Two days afterwards Roger Miles received Valentina's letter. He put it together and read it. That was not difficult, and he never dreamed whose fingers had torn it. To him it was only an extreme instance of her change-

ableness. She had written it, and then torn it, thinking it had better not go. Then perhaps, in some rush of old recollections, she had hastily put it up after all. Roger thought rather bitterly that her first idea had been the best. With all its kindness, it was a cruel letter to send him; yet of course she did not know that.

He sat down late that night and wrote a long, long answer to *Valentina*, covering many sheets of paper. This was not meant for the post; she was never to see it; he meant to obey her orders, and not write to her again. But it did the poor fellow good to fancy that he was telling all the history of his life to her. No doubt it was a morbid and foolish production. Roger's mental life for the last three years had not been very healthy. But when those sheets were written, and locked away safely in an inner drawer of his desk, he felt better and more cheerful again. Three years! He remembered very well when, on the news of her engagement to Golding, he had asked her if she was happy, her saying that he might ask her again in three years. Had she forgotten that, or were those words in her letter, in such different circumstances, meant as an answer to his old question, 'I suppose I am happier than I have any right to be.'

Well! Roger only hoped and prayed that he might have done Frank injustice all this time.

A few days later came the portrait in coloured chalks, a sad picture of her, truly, but still herself. Roger hung it up in his library, opposite his favourite chair. Mrs. Miles, too, often came to look at it, but always turned away hastily with some pained exclamation.

'O Roger, what a sad story there is in that face! She looks

as if she was a wanderer, and could find no home anywhere. Poor girl!' Roger was silent, but an unreasonable thought was in his mind. He thought that once upon a time his mother might have altered the whole course of their lives by giving *Valentina* a home when she asked for it. But she would not, and so the first step was taken towards the end.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### CHRISTMAS-EVE.

ROBERT HARTLESS and his wife were not wanderers by nature, and after their year abroad they seemed more inclined than ever before to settle down at Stoney-court. Except a few weeks' absence in London now and then, they were there almost entirely for the next three years, during which their brother and sister did not come back to England. Their character rose in the neighbourhood; they were becoming respectable stay-at-home squires, and were tolerably sociable with their neighbours. Mr. Hartless could never be really popular, but he did his duty, appeared at the Petty Sessions, in the hunting-field, asked people to shoot and to dine, and had his property in capital order. Lady Julia, though she made no friends, was charitable and good-natured in her way, and every year gave two or three agreeable dances.

Roger Miles went to the house now and then, but not often. He disliked and shrank from the place as much as *Valentina* did. His drives that way generally ended in the village, where he was always welcome at the Rectory. Mr. Linton used to look up from his study table rather anxiously, when he caught a

glimpse of two figures slowly crossing the lawn, pacing up and down deep in talk. It had occurred to him long ago, as well as to Mrs. Miles, that the young people would be a good match for each other, and he thought that now that troublesome girl, who had certainly attracted young Miles, was finally disposed of, the friendship which had grown out of long acquaintance might grow into something more. Mr. Linton did nothing to push matters on, for he was not a scheming man, except so far as to give Roger a general invitation to the Rectory. Roger availed himself of this pretty often, but perhaps the Rector would not have been quite so well pleased if he had known that in their pacings up and down the two were generally talking of Valentina. Mary took a deep interest in her, and knew Roger's story as well as if he had told it all in plain words. She had constructed it out of hints that he had dropped, out of surmises of other people, out of recollections of her own. She thought it all very sad and romantic; she was full of pity for the quiet dark browed young man, so steady and straightforward, so gravely cheerful in his disappointed life. Mary was too honest a girl not to know, and confess to herself, that when Roger Miles went away she missed him, that his visits were the pleasantest events in her quiet life, that his affairs interested her quite as much as her own. She may even have caught herself wishing that everything had been different; but the sweeping foolishness of such a wish as this made it quite inadmissible into a reasonable mind like Mary's, and she kept her honest friendship without a shadow of envy or jealousy or any silly sentiment.

All this time Frank and Valentina stayed abroad. It seemed that she meant to carry out her words, and never to come back to England. On the rare occasions that Roger saw Lady Julia Hartless, he always asked after his sister, and Lady Julia would answer, 'Thank you, I believe she is very well. When we heard last they were in Egypt—or at Constantinople, or Vienna, or St. Petersburg

There was no reason to suppose that the couple thus travelling together were not happy and prosperous. Roger told himself many times that they were. Time, which does indeed work wonders, was slowly bringing him resignation; yet it was far harder to be contented now than in the old days when he had given her up to poor Billy Golding. In some strange way Billy's honesty and friendliness made it easier then. He was their friend then, the friend of both of them. Now, whenever he thought of her, he thought of Frank Hartless too, and that brought a sudden feeling of unforgiving rage as well as of deep anxiety; surely she could not long be happy with a man of Frank's nature. And yet, said reason, if they care even a little for each other, you have no right to suspect anything wrong.

It was Christmas-eve, and old-fashioned weather. All the earth was shining with hoar frost, the water was bound up in ice, and every one who had time was out skating. Roger's home was cheerful with children's voices: Mr. and Mrs. Tomlinson and their three children had arrived a day or two before. Roger came down restless and out of sorts on Christmas-eve. He had not the natural feelings of an uncle, and the children bored him, nice little things as they were. Fanny spoiled

them, he thought ; sh<sup>l</sup> let them run wild all over the house, and the eldest boy Roger was just growing mischievous. So that day a drive to Stoneycourt Rectory, and a quiet luncheon with Mr. Linton and Mary, seemed altogether a pleasant idea. Fanny warned him that Mary would not want him ; she would be very busy decorating the church. Roger observed that if he found himself in the way he would come home, but he seemed to think this state of things so unlikely that Fanny remarked afterwards to her mother that she supposed Roger and Mary understood each other. Mrs. Miles shook her head ; she wished she could think so.

' Well, it looks very like it, at all events,' said Mrs. Tomlinson.

Mary received Roger with her usual calm friendliness, but there was a little excitement in her manner, a lively look in her quiet eyes, when she asked him if he was going to Lady Julia's dance on New Year's Eve.

' She asked us, and I believe my mother accepted,' said Roger. ' But no ; I don't think I shall go. My dancing days are over. Unless Fanny insists upon it.'

Mary said no more about it then. Her father came in, luncheon was ready, and she wanted to ask about Fanny's children. But by-and-by, when Mr. Linton was gone back to his study, and Roger had followed her into the drawing-room, she looked up at him with a rather anxious expression which suggested that something was wrong.

' What is it ? Am I in your way ? ' said Roger. ' Fanny said you would be doing the church, and I should be a plague to you.'

' No, no,' said Mary ; ' the church is nearly done. I am going there presently, to put a

few finishing touches. It is only that I had something to say. Why won't you go to the dance ? I hope you will.'

' Do you ? You are very good, I'm sure,' said Roger rather dismally.

' You don't know ? ' said Mary, smiling a little.

' Know what ? '

Roger turned upon her almost as sternly as on that evening long ago, at his own house, when she had mentioned Lady Valentina's name.

' That they are here,' said Mary.

' Have you seen her ? '

' No. But I have heard—it is not nice to hear things through servants, is it ?—but her old French maid Aurélie knows my maid very well, and she told her that Lady Valentina was not at all well. I could not make out what was the matter, but it seems as if it might be rather rash for her to come to England in this bitter weather.'

' If that fellow wanted to come to England for any purpose of his own—'

' Don't you remember,' said Mary, ' we agreed that we would not be prejudiced. It is just as likely to be a fancy of hers.'

' I hope it is.'

After this Roger became so silent and thoughtful that Mary presently proposed going to the church, and he walked with her to the churchyard gate. There he stopped. The church was quite near the Stoneycourt entrance ; the low red sun, lighting up the clear white world with a rosy glow, shone on the windows of the great house ; it stood there brilliant on its hill among its silvered fir-trees. All was very still and silent ; no one was to be seen moving except those two figures that came along the road and paused under the boughs of the

great elms beside the churchyard gate. Mary looked rosy and fresh, the picture of health and goodness; she was just about to ask Roger why he stopped, when a peal of bells broke out from the gray tower, clangling and clashing as if they meant to shake the old church down.

'Shall you be twenty minutes? I'll meet you here again in twenty minutes,' said Roger, looking at his watch. 'I think I will just walk up to the house and ask for Lady Valentina. I shall not see her, most likely, but—I should like to do that.'

'Very well,' said Mary, cheerfully. 'But they skate all day, I believe, on the pool in the park. So I am afraid you will not see her. O yes, I shall be quite ready in twenty minutes, and if you are not come I will go home.'

'All right,' said Roger, and he set off at once, walking very fast. Mary proceeded rather gravely to her work.

She had not told him half that Aurélie had said to her maid. It had all been very painful and shocking, and she had seriously begged her good Elizabeth to let it go no further. In fact, Mary had felt that she was doing wrong while she listened. But the subject interested her so deeply that she could not help listening, though she believed that a great deal she heard might be mere gossip. It seemed incredible to her happy mind that such things should be. It would have been impossible for her to horrify Roger Miles by detailing them to him. As it was, the whole affair made Mary feel very uncomfortable. She seemed likely to have experience in real life of that state of things called 'sensation' which she was always careful to avoid in books. For by no puzzling of her brains could she decide what was

to become of poor Lady Valentina.

Roger walked up the high avenue of firs that led to Stoney-court House. The ground fell away on each side to the park, with groups of firs and gray-trunked beeches scattered here and there. One or two side-paths climbed up the ridge and joined the main avenue, and as Roger approached the house, at the far end of one of these, moving slowly, and dark against the sunset, he saw the figure of a tall slight woman wrapped in a cloak. She was climbing the hill with a weary effort, as it seemed; now and then she paused for an instant, and looked back into the glades of the park, as if she expected to see some one following her. After first catching sight of her, Roger moved back a step or two, and watched her slowly coming through the red fir-stems. He had known from the first instant that it was Valentina. He reminded himself that he must expect to find her changed; they had not met for more than four years, not since those melancholy days at Visieux. Though Mary Linton had warned him that she was not well, he thought she would surely be much more cheerful than in those days; it would indeed be strange if she was not.

As she came nearer her movements struck him as so weak, so uncertain, that he felt a sudden fear of startling her, and moved on past the opening of her path on the avenue, thinking it best that she should see him going quietly on before her. But just as he stepped forward she saw and recognised him. She lifted up her hand and spoke. Roger could not hear what she said, but he took off his hat and hurried down the path to meet her. Before he reached her, he felt as if he must

cry out and ask her what she had done with all her beauty and youth. This poor frail shadow, with wasted features, leaning as she stood upon a cane, with a look almost of terror in her large dark eyes, and painful lines about her mouth, which trembled strangely as she tried to smile at Roger. Could this be herself, the wild girl of four years ago ! She not only looked ill, she looked so utterly broken-down and miserable, that the colour flushed into Roger's face, and tears blinded his eyes, and he only wished that Frank Hartless was there, for he thought he could have killed him.

They looked at each other for a moment without speaking.

'Have you come to see me ? I thought you would,' she said, in very low voice.

'Yes. I was in the village. I only heard just now that you were here. What have you been doing ? You are awfully tired,' said Roger eagerly.

'Yes—you need not tell me, I know—I know I am not the same,' said Valentina, shaking her head ; and then glancing hastily round, as if she thought some one must be following her. 'It is just that. I am awfully tired. People are skating down there, and I stayed as long as I could. But it was so cold—foggy in the low ground, you know—so I am going in now. Let me take your arm, please. I have not been quite strong lately.'

She took Roger's arm and leaned upon it rather heavily as they walked slowly towards the house. Roger felt quite incapable of any ordinary talk. He could not have been much more shocked if he had found her lying dead among the pine-trees. He kept on telling himself, with a sort of vague insistence, that this was Valentina, his child friend, his one love, and then adding

with a chill horror—Frank Hartless's wife ! He looked stern and grave; his face was thinner than it used to be, and his dark hair a little gray at the temples. Otherwise his companion, looking up at him with something too weak and tired to be curiosity, could see no change.

'I am so glad to see you again,' she said, when they were in the avenue, and were walking up together in full view of the many windows.

'I have often wondered if you would ever be in England,' said Roger. 'I have never thanked you for sending me your picture. You told me not to write again, and I thought it was best to obey.'

'O yes, much best—I quite meant it,' she answered rather hurriedly. 'And did you like the picture ? Have you got it still ?'

'Certainly. It is very like you. It is a great treasure.'

He thought that he had never known before how like it was. He had been accustomed to think of it as far too wistful and sad-looking, and had been half provoked, sometimes, when by gazing at it long, so long that he could almost see it breathe, he had failed to conjure the mouth and eyes into a smile. Now it seemed as if the picture was a prophecy. As for asking her *now* if she was happy, who could be bold enough ? Not her old friend Roger, certainly. His first feelings of surprise, anger, and grief were deepening into one strong feeling of intense pity.

They went into the house together ; and she took him straight into the small drawing-room, where Lady Julia, who was not an energetic skater, was sitting lazily near a large fire.

'You are come in, dear ! I am very glad,' she said ; and she

went to Valentina quite tenderly, and began to unfasten her cloak.

'I stole away. I was so cold, so tired,' said Valentina in a half-whisper. 'I thought you would stand by me, and say it was right.'

'Yes, yes,' murmured Lady Julia soothingly, as if to a child. 'There, now take your hat off, and sit in this comfortable chair. Mr. Miles, I beg your pardon! How do you do!'

Lady Julia's rosy face looked quite anxious and sad. She was uneasy till her sister was established quite close to the fire, had laid her head back, and smil'd at her.

'Mr. Miles picked me up in the avenue,' said Valentina in low weary tones. 'So my walk was not quite so bad as it might have been. They said the ice was splendid; so I hope they won't be in for a very long time.'

'I daresay not. Do you skate?' said Lady Julia to Roger.

He found that he must talk to her while Valentina rested, and he did his best, though his eyes, as well as Lady Julia's, were constantly wandering towards that still languid figure in the chair by the fire. They dropped their voices as if by mutual consent, when Valentina's eyelids sank slowly, and the long dark lashes lay motionless. In a few minutes Roger thought he had better go.

He got up quietly. Valentina did not move; she seemed to be asleep. The trouble in Lady Julia's face, as she held out her hand to him, was so evident, that Roger's lips could not help forming the words, 'What is it?' He knew he had no right to ask; but Lady Julia did not look offended. For some reason she was softened, and glad of sympathy. She glanced at Valen-

tina, and then, looking at him, shook her head very sadly. That was all; and it only made Roger more miserable, giving him the idea that Valentina's suffering was not merely physical. As he went out of the room he looked back once at her still pale profile in the firelight.

He forgot his appointment with Mary at the church, and walked straight back to the Rectory, where, however, she had arrived first. She was anxious and curious to hear his adventures; but he said very little; she had never seen him so preoccupied. He only said that he had seen Lady Valentina; that she looked very ill and worn, and seemed out of spirits. Mary felt that she could have explained all this; but she did not volunteer, and they asked each other no questions. The afternoon was closing in, and Roger soon ordered his dog-cart and drove away home.

Mary sighed; she began to think it was a very sad world.

Late that night Roger told his mother all about it; the painful failing of Valentina's young life; Lady Julia's manner, which had struck him most forcibly, giving the idea of a pity and sorrow for her sister which conquered all conventionalism. It seemed much stronger than the feeling roused by ordinary illness; and Roger could not make out what the illness was. In consumption, for instance, she surely would not have been out so late on a frosty Christmas-eve. It was more like a general and indescribable failure of all her strength!

'That poor mother of hers, you know—' said Mrs. Miles.

'It is not that. Her mind is as clear as yours or mine.'

'But weakened, you say. That would account for Lady Julia's manner.'

'I think her manner might mean remorse.'

'What for?'

'For making up the match, which, of course, she and her husband did.'

'Ah, you think it is an unhappy marriage.'

'Miserable, I believe. I feel sure she is afraid of him.'

'She, afraid of any man?' said Mrs. Miles with a faint smile.

'Yes, mother; and just think what that must mean!'

Mrs. Miles was impressed. After some minutes she said,

'I should like to see her.'

'You shall see her. We will go to that ball.'

'Well, if I must—' said Mrs. Miles.

It was a great concession from her, who never went anywhere; but somehow it seemed to come in the light of a duty to Roger, who had drawn her very near to him of late by his frank confidence. So she made up her mind to go to the ball, and, considering her object in going, was not altogether sorry that Fanny and John found it necessary to go back to their parsonage before New Year's day.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### NEW YEAR'S EVE.

A CHRISTMAS ball at Stoneycourt seemed a contradiction in terms; and yet the owners of Stoneycourt were only two among the thousands nowadays who think Christmas a bore, and its old-fashioned rejoicings only fit for tradespeople. However, they did give a ball, as other people do, and perhaps among their younger guests one or two may have enjoyed it a little more because it was Christmas-time, and felt a small thrill of added excitement

when they heard the bells ringing out the old year, and thought that they themselves were going to dance it out. But of course the great majority went either with no feeling at all but that of mere amusement, or else in weary fulfilment of the duty they owed to society. One of the few who still had a little romance left was Mary Linton. Her enjoyment of a dance, with all its accompaniments, was quite odd in such a sensible woman; and she also knew that old mysterious joy which Christmas still brings to perhaps a dozen souls in England. On the other hand, no two people ever went to a dance with graver spirits than Mrs. Miles and Roger. She looked very handsome in her diamonds, which she had hoped long ago to have made over to a daughter-in-law. Now she thought, sadly enough, that Roger would never marry. He was nearly four-and-thirty, and signs of old bachelorhood were beginning to show themselves.

There were a great many people at Stoneycourt that evening; but at first they did not see either Frank Hartless or Valentina. Presently, in a pause in a polka which he was dancing with Miss Linton, Roger caught sight of Frank at the other end of the room. He was dancing with a fast girl who lived in the neighbourhood, and who may, perhaps, have had a spark of womanly feeling under her paint and powder and arrangements generally. She was handsome; she had dark eyes, which flashed wonderfully; and when in another minute the music stopped, and she walked along the room with Frank, talking and laughing, their voices and appearance seemed somehow to silence everybody for the moment. People glanced at them, heard their loud clatter and rattle, and

then turned away their eyes with a smile or a frown, all but two or three foolish young men who envied Frank, admiring his partner.

'Look at him with Miss Jezebel—Miss Horsman, I beg her pardon,' said Roger to Mary, as they passed not far off.

'Don't you think he is very much gone off?' suggested Mary.

'Gone off! Well, he never had much looks to boast of. He looks more of a vulgar brute than he did.'

Just then Miss Horsman met somebody she wanted to talk to, and released Mr. Frank, who stared round him in search of acquaintances. He certainly was gone off, as Mary said. He had grown fat and red, and his expression was more definitely disagreeable than ever before; his air of careless good-humour seemed to have left him. His brother Robert, whose slim figure and pale face were unchanged, had now very much the advantage. Frank still looked clever; but it seemed as if he no longer cared to look pleasant, and thus he had lost his redeeming point, a certain geniality which made him popular.

'Hollo, Miles! you here! Haven't seen you for centuries,' said Frank, suddenly walking up to Roger, and holding out his hand.

Roger was almost amused by the man's coolness.

'Ah! About four centuries,' he said. He had not forgotten, if Frank had, their last talk in the street of Visieux.

'Four, is it? I should have said ten; but I am not good at dates, and no doubt you are. Isn't he, Miss Linton? Can't he repeat the English kings without a mistake?'

'I never heard him,' said Mary.

'He is too modest to boast of it, but if you try him, you will

find I'm right. Come, Miles, have you seen my wife? Don't you want to dance with her?'

'Is Lady Valentina dancing?' said Roger.

'She has not begun yet, but she will. She's lazy, she's shamming, she's hidden herself behind the curtains somewhere. Come along, and we'll look for her.'

Roger did not at all care for the idea of joining in a chase after Lady Valentina. He made some excuse and walked away with Mary.

Meanwhile Mrs. Miles, as she had foreseen, was finding herself rather out of her element. It was not so many years since she had taken Fanny to dances, but it seemed a very long time. She had never cared much for society at all, and, in this shape, had avoided it ever since those days. She disapproved of all the frivolity she saw around her, which had increased greatly, she thought, since Fanny was a girl. After talking to different people about their daughters, remarking to herself that Lady Julia was certainly one of the worst hostesses she had ever seen, watching Roger rather sadly as he danced and walked about with his friend Mary Linton, wondering whether Lady Valentina meant to appear, and concluding that if she did not, this was the last time *she* would take any trouble about her, Mrs. Miles at length made her way out of the dancing room, stalked, an imposing figure in her black garments, along the drawing room, where there were many groups of people talking, and seeing a door open at the farther end, passed through it, and found herself in the presence of the person she was looking for.

Lady Valentina, her white dress all crumpled and untidy, was sitting crouched in the corner of a

sofa, her head turned away, her face half-hidden against the cushion. Her husband was standing before her with his back to the door, where Mrs. Miles paused for an instant on seeing them.

'What do you mean?' he was saying angrily. 'You *will* dance. Do you want them all to think you are out of your mind?'

'Do they think so? I wish I was.'

'How can you be such a fool?'

At first Mrs. Miles thought of retreating, but something told her it would be right to put a stop to this scene, and she moved forward. Frank Hartless turned quickly round and met her severe eyes. He knew her very slightly, and had not seen her for years, but he claimed acquaintance with his usual readiness.

'Valentina,' he said, 'look here, rouse up, here's Mrs. Miles.'

Valentina rose slowly from her corner, looking even more frightened and miserable than before. Perhaps her recollections of Mrs. Miles were not very pleasing. And yet when that good woman pressed her hand and looked straight and kindly into her eyes, there came a sort of brightening, a momentary relief.

'Does Mrs. Miles remember me?' she said softly. 'And is your son here?'

'Yes, I tell you, and you are going to dance with him,' said Frank.

'It is not that I don't want to dance with Mr. Miles,' Valentina said, looking at Roger's mother; 'only I should be glad not to dance at all.'

'Did you ever hear such an absurd fancy, Mrs. Miles?' exclaimed her husband. 'I was telling her as you came in how odd and unfriendly every one would think it. However, she has come to her senses, and I shall

send her a partner directly. In the meantime she can pour out her wrongs to you, Mrs. Miles. Doesn't she look like a creature to be pitied?'

He said all this half-laughing, Mrs. Miles listening gravely, his wife looking away from both towards the fire. As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Miles sat down beside Valentina on the sofa. She was quite as much shocked as Roger had expected. She also found herself in a great difficulty, into which, however, she had certainly walked with her eyes open. How to speak to this poor girl she did not know. It was impossible to allude to what her careless mocking husband had just said. Even if Mrs. Miles's principles had not forbidden her to interfere between married people, there was in this instance no excuse for her doing so. She was not even an old friend. If it had been good for Lady Valentina to confide in her, she was hardly likely to take such a step here, liable to interruptions at any moment.

'You have not been here for a long time, Lady Valentina,' said Mrs. Miles at last, when the silence was becoming awkward. Valentina seemed to awake from a dream. She turned her face towards Mrs. Miles slowly, and with rather a vacant look. Then a smile crept into it gradually, and she startled Mrs. Miles by laying her hand on hers and saying, 'Have you any daughters?'

Mrs. Miles restrained her surprise, and answered this Lear-like question simply and quietly. She could not imagine why it was asked, or what her daughters could have to do with Lady Valentina's troubles.

'Yes,' she said. 'I have two; both married.'

'Are they happy?'

'Happily married? yes, I hope so. I think they are.'

'Did you choose their husbands for them?'

'No—not exactly. I approved of them.'

'Then what a happy family you are! You, and Mr. Miles, and his sisters, and their husbands, who are like two more sons. Do you love them all very much?'

'I suppose I do,' said Mrs. Miles. 'I have some little grandchildren too.'

'I don't care so much for the children. They have not such warm hearts. But how I should like to have a mother, and plenty of brothers and sisters, and to be loved and cared for by all of them. O, it would be heaven! But instead of that I get lonelier and lonelier, and I am like a poor prisoner behind iron bars, aching to get free. My heart is aching at this moment, because nobody loves me. That is nothing new, though; it aches always. O, if any one knew the pain!'

Mrs. Miles watched her steadily and thoughtfully. She had taken the hand that had been laid on hers, and was holding it gently, but Valentine had turned her face again towards the fire.

'Your sister loves you,' she said, after a minute's thought.

'She is rather sorry for me, because she thinks I am going to die, and none of them meant that. But she won't help me. When I complain to her, she tells me to be patient. Somebody told me once that patient meant the same thing as suffering. Well, I think I have suffered enough.'

'Ought you to be talking to me like this?' said Mrs. Miles gravely.

'I am only taking him at his word. He said I could pour out my wrongs to you—and certainly I have not done that. O, I am all made up of wrongs. You

must see it. Mr. Miles sees it, I am sure, and I know it grieves him. He likes me to be happy, but not heartless. He knows I did not mean it, and I was very sorry, but I had not courage to go on being unhappy for ever. I am one of those wretched people who don't know that they have a heart till somebody tries to break it for them. That takes a long time, and is most dreadful pain.'

'My dear, you must not say such terrible things,' said Mrs. Miles. 'And I think you are mistaken. You are ill, and these sad fancies come into your mind. No one can be trying to break your heart.'

'Fancies!' said Valentine with a little laugh. 'Now I will tell you the whole truth. I can trust you as I could him; your eyes are exactly alike, I see. Dear Mr. Miles's mother, I never, never have my own way now. I struggled for a long time, but it was no use struggling with him, and now I am just as bad as a slave, except that I never can feel like one. There is always something springing up against him, even when I do the most ridiculous things that he tells me. I dare not say I want a thing, for he never lets me have it. I never write a letter; I never buy anything to please myself. He chooses my clothes, and tells me what to wear. He laughs at me before people, and when we are alone he is unkind to me. You think I am ill, but there is nothing the matter with me except this. I was not made to be like this, and if death was not so dreadful I should not be a slave very long.'

Mrs. Miles sat listening and looking in horror. The poor thing had thrown off her languor for the moment, a flood of colour had rushed into her face, her eyes were shining, a strained, feverish, ner-

vous eagerness had seized upon her. She drew her breath quickly, and Mrs. Miles was terribly afraid of a burst of passionate tears, which, though they might have been a relief to that aching heart, would certainly have brought undesirable crowds from the next room. As it was, that bitter complaint had been partly overheard. Valentina had hardly paused in her quick speech, with a long sobbing sigh, when somebody in the room said under his breath, 'A wounded spirit who can bear!'

Valentina did not hear or notice it. Mrs. Miles looked round quickly, and was half glad, half sorry to see her son, who had come into the room by the farther door. In another moment she was quite glad, for Valentina's sake and her own, if not for his. She had never admired him so much before. He came up and spoke to Valentina with quiet friendliness, and then stood by her talking pleasantly and reasonably, as if she was any ordinary person. Mrs. Miles could not afterwards remember what he talked about, but she did remember the feeling of calm and safety, of effort and anxiety suddenly relaxed, which came to her in the sound of his voice, and the sight of him standing there. She watched Valentina curiously, for, much as she had heard of their friendship, she had hardly ever seen them together before. For the first few minutes Valentina sat with drooping eyes, hardly answering him, as if she was still too much agitated to speak; but presently something he said made her smile, and she looked up and gave him such a bright quick answer as might have belonged to years ago. And then there followed a few sentences of quite cheerful talk, during which her cheeks kept their colour and her

eyes their light without the feverishness, and Mrs. Miles, looking on with deep interest, was reminded of the strangely attractive young beauty who had come to her in her garden one summer morning when she was gathering roses and carnations. Mrs. Miles knew that she herself had softened very much since those days; still she did not see that she could have granted that girl's mad request. But now it seemed to her that she would willingly do anything, or let Roger do anything, to bring back life and happiness to the weary heart. That there was anything possible to be done, she could not see. Lady Valentina had chosen her lot in life for herself, and it could not be altered now. Frank had been no stranger, met accidentally abroad; she could hardly have thought—if she thought at all—that he was an amiable man, and perhaps Mr. Hartless and Lady Julia could not have been expected to warn her against their brother, especially as the match was so very advantageous for him.

Mrs. Miles, with all her pity, could not bring herself to wish that Roger had married this girl, though of course that would have been the happy fate for her. She thought her so very, very odd, so extraordinary, and, looking at her, she was constantly remembering the stories she had heard of poor Lady Weston's eccentricities. She, like Valentina, had married a bad man; and like her had descended from the state of a gay young beauty to that of a complaining, worn out, miserable woman. Mrs. Miles had heard that Lady Weston used to complain of her husband's unkindness to every one she met, and had cordially despised her for it. She was unwilling to think that her daughter resembled her also in that, which

she considered a depth of disloyalty and contemptible weakness indeed.

'You don't care to dance?' Roger said presently, encouraged by Valentina's cheerfulness.

'I was wondering how much longer I could resist the music,' she said rather absently. 'Yes, I will dance if you like.'

As they went out of the room she turned, and gave Mrs. Miles a strange sweet smile, which filled the good woman's heart with a vague uneasiness, and made her after a minute or two follow them to the dancing-room. There they were, waltzing together. Many eyes were turned upon them, and remarks were made which Mrs. Miles rather wished she could hear. Presently, before the dance was ended, she became aware that they were gone.

Out of the hall at Stoneycourt there opened a large conservatory with a domed roof, where palms and tropical trees and large ferns grew very tall. The place was heated, and lighted with hanging lamps which threw strange shadows of outlandish leaves on the floor. From the roof the long red blossoms of some foreign creeper hung down into the light. At the further side there was a door leading out upon a flight of steps, and down into the garden. Lady Valentina, when she was tired of dancing, made Roger take her into this glass house, and they wandered round and round there once or twice. By some miracle, or rather by Roger's extreme care, they had till now kept off dangerous subjects. But now she said suddenly, 'Frank hates this place. He never comes here; he says it stifles him. I like it, partly for that reason. Who is that wretch he was dancing with just now?'

'Miss Horsman. She is not a bad sort of girl, I believe,' said Roger.

'Nobody is bad, according to you. My idea of human nature has been lowered considerably, I must tell you, in the last three years. Have you ever wondered how I was getting on? O, I have learnt so much. I have learnt what lies people can tell, how cruel they can be, how false, how vulgar, and yet be considered just as good as anybody else.'

'A sad lesson,' said Roger.

'A lesson I never expected to learn, certainly, but I know it thoroughly by heart. I have been telling your mother all my history. She listened to me very kindly. I love your mother. There is something noble and good about her. I did not love her years ago, but I know better now. I wish I could live over again, and not make all those terrible mistakes. Are you sorry for me?'

'Yes!' said Roger in a low voice. 'But—may I say something, I wonder?'

'You may say anything you like. Are you going to scold me?'

He looked down at her, and could have thought they had both gone back six years, to that moonlit evening when they walked about in his garden, and he would not let her go straight to the stable-yard to try the young chestnut. The young chestnut was advancing in years now, and Lady Valentina had never been on his back yet. There was the same playful look in her face now, the same sweet childish tone in her voice—not quite the same, though, for to-night they both had a tremulous background; not very far behind them were sighs and tears.

'What business have I to scold you?' said Roger.

'That you know best,' she answered, still playfully. 'Perhaps you will say that you never did scold me; people are so forgetful. But go on with your speech.'

Roger found her variations almost too much for him. Anything earnest or serious seemed out of place now; yet another minute might bring her back to her former mood again, so Roger went on, feeling like a blunderer.

'Do you remember a letter you wrote to me from Homburg, soon after—'

'Soon after I married Frank? Yes, perfectly—every word of it.'

The answer was so gentle that Roger felt encouraged. He went on, smiling,

'Then you will forgive me if I remind you of something you said—that you hoped you would never forget to be good.'

'Am I not good?' she said very softly.

'Indeed you are; but there is a hard unattractive kind of goodness which is called for from some people. One doesn't always see the necessity of it; it is necessary, though, if one wants to climb any heights at all.'

'What is it?'

'Endurance.'

'Ah, that is very fine; but don't talk of climbing heights to me. You don't seem to know what a weak thing I am, and yet you might have found me out by this time. No; you are right; I have no endurance. I never could bear anything. If I suffer, I must cry. Don't make me talk about it, because I must not complain to you. But you see, my friend, I am miserable.'

'Don't tell me that any more,' said Roger. He spoke abruptly, and there was a sharp pain in his voice.

Valentina looked up at him, and instantly changed her tone.

'No,' she said; 'I will try not to be selfish. Now let us leave off being dismal. Listen to those bells. The year is done, thank

heaven! Can you open that door? I want to look out.'

Roger unfastened some bolts, and she walked out on the top of the garden steps.

It was a calm sweet night—not cold; white feathery clouds were drifting slowly over the moon, which was now high in the sky. The music indoors was for a moment still, and the noise seemed far off from them while those pealing bells were ringing in their ears, and echoing from all the building; round. For a few minutes they listened silently. Roger stood against the door, two steps from Valentina, and thought that he at least knew what endurance meant—or perhaps only the struggle after it. Presently she turned to him, and he fancied that in her manner there was a certain gentle solemnity.

'I shall be twenty-five this year,' she said. 'How old are you?'

'Very old; I don't know—thirty-five,' said Roger.

'So much as that! It must be nine or ten years since we first met. How horrid I have been ever since! And yet you never seem to have actually disliked me. You have done me a great deal of good; thank you for it.'

'I have not been able to do anything for you at all,' said Roger.

'I don't do my friends much credit, certainly,' she said. She was not looking at him now, but away into the dim, spectral, moonlit landscape. 'Do you ever think of Billy?' she went on, in a low dreamy voice. Roger thought he must himself be dreaming; but no. 'Dear old fellow! Stoney-court always makes me think of him. I wonder why he was taken away from me! If only he had got better, I should have been so happy and so good. After he died I thought I could never be

more miserable ; but I did not learn any lesson, you see. I forgot everything, and thought I would be happy again after all ; and this is how it has ended.'

'Don't blame yourself ; he would never have wished you to go on grieving,' Roger said earnestly.

She went on as if she had not heard him, almost in a whisper, as if she was talking to herself.

'Dear generous fellow ! I have thought it over, and I know him very well now—better than I did when he was alive. He ought to have married some one steady and good, not an unfeeling creature like me, who was never anything but a plague to him. I wonder where he is now ! Wherever he is, I think he must be happy ; don't you ?'

Roger was silent. In a minute she turned round and looked at him, awaking suddenly, as it appeared, from her dream.

'What am I doing all this time !' she said. 'You don't want to be here.'

'Unless you are catching cold, I am perfectly contented.'

He did not understand the new expression in her face. She seemed for once to be thinking of him, considering him personally, not as an abstract friend.

'May I say something to you, in my turn ?' she said, beginning to smile, as if at some thought quite new and amusing. 'May I ask you a question ? you won't mind it from me.'

'I shall be honoured,' said Roger quietly. He certainly could not guess what she was thinking of.

'I don't know why, but I feel surprised, because I never thought of your marrying. But since I came here I have heard some rumour about you and Miss Lir-

ton, and I do hope it is true. I should like you to be happy.'

Her voice faltered a little, for almost before the words were said she knew that it was all a mistake.

Roger coloured crimson.

'I like and respect Miss Linton so much,' he said, 'that we won't allude to her again, please. Your idea was quite right. I have no intention of marrying.'

'You must forgive me. I am very sorry. I ought not to have listened to the report at all.'

'People will talk in these country places,' said Roger. 'If it goes no further, there is no harm done.'

'Julia hinted something ; but I am sorry I asked you,' said Valentina. 'It seems a pity, after all.'

'What ?'

'That you should not marry—a good man like you, who would make his wife happy. It is all very fine, respecting her, and not mentioning her name, and all that. I believe she likes you.'

Roger made no reply.

'Are you angry ?' said Valentina after a moment.

'No,' he answered. 'You don't know my history ; if you did, you would understand.'

'Tell me,' she said, coming a step nearer.

He felt that he had her whole interest and sympathy, and that she had not the faintest idea of what was in his mind. In her tone there was surprise and a friendly curiosity. He looked down, looked away into the moonlight, and said in a low voice, as if the subject was almost too painful,

'Then I must trust you with my secret. There was somebody once—the only woman for me. That could not be, and so I made up my mind to be alone.'

'O, poor friend!' said Valentina under her breath. 'Then she died?'

'No; she is alive. She married. It is an old story, you understand.'

'Married somebody else! She must have been a very foolish girl. Do you ever see her?'

'Now and then. Don't let us talk about her any more. Surely you must be cold. Here is your sister coming. She would not approve of our standing out here.'

'Tell me—is she happy, do you think?'

'I hope so.'

'But she was a foolish girl. I am so sorry. When shall we have

another talk? You must come and see me in town; we have taken a house for the season'

Lady Julia came hurrying along the conservatory.

'My dear Val, how can you be so mad! Mr. Miles, you should not have allowed it; the least thing gives her cold.'

'Never mind; it has done me good,' said Valentina. 'We have had a pleasant talk of old times.'

Roger did not hear much of what Lady Julia said, as they went back into the house. In the midst of his sadness there was a certain exultation. He was not sorry to think that, even in this veiled fashion, he had told Valentina the truth.

*(To be continued.)*

## LASCA.

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It's all very well to write reviews,  
And carry umbrellas, and keep dry shoes,  
And say what every one's saying here,  
And wear what every one else must wear ;  
But to-night I'm sick of the whole affair,  
I want free life and I want fresh air ;  
And I sigh for the canter after the cattle,  
The crack of the whips like shots in a battle,  
The melody of horns and hoofs and heads  
That wars and wrangles and scatters and spreads ;  
The green beneath, and the blue above ;  
And dash and danger, and life and love.

And Lasca !

Lasca used to ride  
On a mouse-gray mustang close to my side,  
With blue *serapé*\* and bright-bellied spur ;  
I laughed with joy as I looked at her !  
Little knew she of books or of creeds ;  
An *Ave Maria* sufficed her needs ;  
Little she cared, save to be by my side,  
To ride with me, and ever to ride,  
From San Saba's shore to Lavaca's tide.  
She was as bold as the billows that beat,  
She was as wild as the breezes that blow ;  
From her little head to her little feet  
She was swayed in her suppleness to and fro  
By each gust of passion ; a sapling pine,  
That grows on the edge of a Kansas bluff,  
And wars with the wind when the weather is rough,  
Is like this Lasca, this love of mine.  
She would hunger that I might eat,  
Would take the bitter and leave me the sweet ;  
But once, when I made her jealous for fun,  
At something I'd whispered, or looked, or done,  
One Sunday, in San Antonio,  
To a glorious girl on the Alamo,†  
She drew from her garter a dear little dagger,  
And—sting of a wasp !—it made me stagger !  
An inch to the left, or an inch to the right,  
And I shouldn't be maundering here to-night ;  
But she sobbed, and, sobbing, so swiftly bound  
Her torn *rebozo*‡ about the wound,  
That I quite forgave her. Scratches don't count  
In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

\* Cloak.

† The principal square in the city of San Antonio.

‡ Headress.

Her eye was brown—a deep, deep brown ;  
Her hair was darker than her eye ;  
And something in her smile and frown,  
Curled crimson lip and instep high,  
Showed that there ran in each blue vein,  
Mixed with the milder Aztec strain,  
The vigorous vintage of Old Spain.  
She was alive in every limb  
With feeling, to the finger-tips ;  
And when the sun is like a fire,  
And sky one shining soft sapphire,  
One does not drink in little sips.

Why did I leave the fresh and the free,  
That suited her and suited me ?  
Listen awhile, and you will see ;  
But this be sure—in earth or air,  
God and God's laws are everywhere,  
And Nemesis comes with a foot as fleet  
On the Texas trail as in Regent Street.

\*       \*       -       \*       \*

The air was heavy, the night was hot,  
I sat by her side, and forgot—forgot :  
Forgot the herd that were taking their rest,  
Forgot that the air was close opprest,  
That the Texas Norther comes sudden and soon,  
In the dead of night or the blaze of noon ;  
That once let the herd at its breath take fright,  
That nothing on earth can stop their flight ;  
And woe to the rider, and woe to the steed,  
Who falls in front of their mad stampede !

\*       \*       \*       \*

Was that thunder ? No, by the Lord !  
I spring to my saddle without a word.  
One foot on mine, and she clung behind.  
Away ! on a hot chase down the wind !  
But never was fox-hunt half so hard,  
And never was steed so little spared,  
For we rode for our lives. You shall hear how we fared  
In Texas, down by the Rio Grande.

The mustang flew, and we urged him on :  
There was one chance left, and you have but one :  
Halt, jump to ground, and shoot your horse ;  
Crouch under his carcase, and take your chance ;  
And if the steers in their frantic course  
Don't batter you both to pieces at once,  
You may thank your star ; if not, good bye  
To the quickening kiss and the long-drawn sigh,  
And the open air and the open sky,  
In Texas, down by the Rio Grande !

The cattle gained on us, and, just as I felt  
 For my old six-shooter behind in my belt,  
 Down came the mustang, and down came we,  
 Clinging together, and—what was the rest ?  
 A body that spread itself on my breast,  
 Two arms that shielded my dizzy head,  
 Two lips that hard on my lips were prest ;  
 Then came thunder in my ears,  
 As over us surged the sea of steers,  
 Blows that beat blood into my eyes,  
 And when I could rise,  
 Lasca was dead !

\*     \*     \*     \*

I gouged out a grave a few feet deep,  
 And there in Earth's arms I laid her to sleep ;  
 And there she is lying, and no one knows,  
 And the summer shines and the winter snows ;  
 For many a day the flowers have spread  
 A pall of petals over her head ;  
 And the little gray hawk hangs aloft in the air,  
 And the sly *coyoté*\* trots here and there,  
 And the black snake glides and glitters and slides  
 Into a rift in a cotton-wood tree ;  
 And the buzzard sails on,  
 And comes and is gone,  
 Stately and still, like a ship at sea ;  
 And I wonder why I do not care  
 For things that are like the things that were.  
 Does half my heart lie buried there  
 In Texas, down by the Rio Grande ?

\* Wolf.

FRANK DESPREZ.

## THE POSTMAN'S KNOCK.

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WHOEVER the original man with a 'grievance' may have been, and of what peculiar grievance he may have complained, it is our firm belief that, were we to probe into the hearts of Londoners in general, we should find a very respectable average of them more or less affected in a similar way ; the sole difference being that the particular annoyance under which they fancy themselves labouring—instead of being hidden beneath a veil of mystery, and therefore only to be guessed at, like the aerostics in a weekly journal—would be openly and circumstantially communicated to any one who had the patience to submit his button-hole to the narrator. It is an undeniable fact that we citizens of the great metropolis have, or imagine we have, which is very much the same thing, a certain prescriptive right to indulge in the national privilege of grumbling, and are by no means slow in availing ourselves of it ; every one of us has his pet grievance, and from sheer force of habit clings to it with such pertinacity, and airs it so complacently, that it is almost a question whether its removal would be more agreeable than embarrassing to him. Some rail at the fogs, others at the Augean stable-like aspect of the streets after snow ; and, as far as these two nuisances are concerned, popular feeling is, we suspect, tolerably unanimous. One man has a constitutionally chronic objection to taxes in general and poor-rates in particular, another declaims against iron hoops and 'tip-cat,' and a third is painfully

eloquent on the fertile theme of barrel-organs. That each of these, it is to be feared, irremediable inconveniences may appropriately be classed among the 'little miseries of life,' few will be disposed to deny ; and that, in our capacity of fellow-sufferers, we are justified in sympathising with those who complain of them, is equally admissible ; but when, as is sometimes the case, we find our excellent friend the postman included in the catalogue, we protest most energetically against so monstrous a vandalism, and indignantly repudiate any possible connection between the obnoxious term 'grievance' and this invaluable—although, as it would seem, insufficiently appreciated—member of society.

For, setting aside for the moment the advantages we personally derive from his periodical appearance at our doors, are we not bound to acknowledge that, among all the busy workers in the great hive of London, none are more indefatigably laborious than our punctual visitor the letter-carrier ? In all weathers and at all seasons, on the sultriest of the dog-days and the most cheerless of winter evenings, alike indifferent to the pitiless nor'-easter that chills him to the bone and to the pelting downpour that wets him to the skin, he plods steadily along from street to street, from house to house, until his round is accomplished ; to be followed, after a brief interval of hardly-earned repose, by the same monotonous tramp over and over again. He has not even the pri-

vilege of varying his route; his beat is marked out for him, and he cannot diverge from it; and so it goes on from day to day, from year to year, until his legs altogether fail him, and another Mercury walks in his stead. We often wonder what becomes of these functionaries, when they have slipped for the last time their epistolary cargo into the familiar letter-boxes, and completed their final circuit of the streets which are henceforth to know them no more. Do they vanish into space, after the fashion popularly attributed to superannuated post-boys, or are they comfortably cared for, as they ought to be, in their declining years? They have at least a special claim on the gratitude of the worshipful company of shoemakers, among whose very best customers, taking into consideration the wear and tear of London pavements, they are, it appears to us, unquestionably entitled to rank.

If a further argument in favour of our *protégé* be necessary, we have only to imagine ourselves—although the bare idea of so disastrous a calamity is sufficient to paralyse any well-regulated mind—deprived by some unaccountable fatality of his periodical visits, and straining our eyes, like sister Anne, in the vain hope of discerning his well-known figure turning the corner of our street. Apart from the inconvenience necessarily resulting from his non-arrival, should we not miss the cheery rat-tat resounding at the doors of our neighbours, preparatory to its onslaught on our own? In the more densely-populated quarters of the town, where a single individual becomes a mere insignificant item in the crowd, his advent is comparatively unnoticed; but in those long, dreary, and

shopless thoroughfares on the north side of Oxford-street, where a passing vehicle is a rarity and the decorous solitude of the locality is seldom disturbed save by the lamplighter or the perambulating muffin-man, his coming is an event, infusing a temporary animation into these metropolitan Saharas, and affording to their inhabitants at least a semblance of communication with the outer world. Fancy Harley-street or Gloucester-place without a postman!

‘*Sar les noires couleurs d'un si triste tableau  
Il faut passer l'éponge, ou tirer le rideau.*’

There are, it must be confessed to their shame, certain individuals of an incurably bilious and misanthropic temperament who, far from hailing our friend's appearance as a pleasant intermezzo in the daily round of life, object to it on the plea that in nine cases out of ten he brings them precisely what they don't want. ‘*Nothing but bills!*’ says one. ‘*Tradesmen's circulars!*’ chim's in another. Well, what then? If people owe bills, they certainly ought to pay them, and an occasional reminder will do them no harm; and as for advertisements, no one is bound to read them, much less to deal with those who send them, a deplorable weakness, from which, on principle, we invariably abstain. By the way, we wonder if anybody does respond to the offers of superlative sherry, Hamburg lottery tickets, cheap dentistry, and non-alcoholic beverages with which every householder is periodically besieged, either despatched by post and consequently deposited in his letter-box, or more economically dropped by seedy-looking men through the area-railings, or adroitly insinuated beneath the

street-door! It is presumable that, like the label on Bob Sawyer's medicine bottle, they are read by some one, or the game would be hardly worth the candle, and we should hear no more of them; whereas they seem to increase and multiply to an alarming extent, perhaps the most original and not altogether agreeable novelty being a neatly-printed miniature treatise warning us of the uncertainty of human existence, and, 'in order to insure perfect satisfaction,' volunteering a supply of coffins and other funeral requisites at reduced prices! For this last specimen of typography the postman was clearly responsible, as also for a gentle hint that our water-rate was slightly in arrear, both having evidently passed through his hands; and under such circumstances we can make allowance for a moderate degree of irritation on the part of the recipient. But, on the other hand, how fully he atones for these involuntary transgressions inseparable from his calling—to which, on reflection, we may add the inevitable requests to figure at public dinners in the capacity of steward, and the even less desirable summons to fulfil our civic duties as jurymen—by bringing us the welcome news that a distant relative whom we never saw, previous to going over to the majority, has thoughtfully bequeathed to us his entire property! Or, lest such unexpected windfalls should possibly appear unusual nowadays (except on the stage), are we not *almost* as much gratified by an invitation to the very identical country house where *la dame de nos pensées* happens to be staying? Is it not exhilarating to learn that our last article has been accepted—we prefer ignoring those 'declined with thanks'—and that the shares purchased by us in a moment of inspiration are at

a premium? And to whom are we indebted for these consolatory tidings but to our estimable and never sufficiently - to - be - valued postman!

We may be permitted to doubt if either our own particular Mercury or any of his colleagues would feel disposed to subscribe their mite towards the erection of a statue in honour of the inventor of Christmas and New-Year cards, their powers of endurance being heavily taxed by these annual distributions; nor is the extra labour thus entailed upon them, to our thinking, proportionally recompensed. They have their Christmas-boxes, it is true, but so they had before, and earned them with infinitely less trouble and fatigue; whereas the roughest calculation of the average number of 'compliments of the season' in all shapes and sizes allotted to each of them will give an idea of the additional burden the recurrence of these festive anniversaries obliges them to carry. We do not profess to be especially enthusiastic on the subject of these ornamental 'reminders,' nor do we believe that any one except the ladies who receive them really is; but we venture to suggest that, considering the amount of money expended every year in following the prevailing fashion, it would be only fair that those without whose aid these supplementary cargoes would stand a poor chance of ever reaching their respective destinations should not be altogether excluded from profiting by the outlay.

People who live in the country, and whose opportunities of receiving letters are necessarily limited to one or at most two deliveries a day, very soon accommodate themselves to circumstances, and regard what a Londoner would consider a serious privation as a matter of course.

It must not, however, be imagined, from the comparative rarity of his visits, that the lot of a rural postman is by any means a sinecure. On the contrary, he is, if possible, even harder worked than his metropolitan brethren, the distances he is obliged to travel being often considerable; and especially in winter, when he has to make his way through drifting snow, and brave the piercing blast and drenching rain, it requires a stout heart and a good pair of legs to enable him to attain his journey's end. Few of them live to an old age, ten or a dozen years of this incessant toil and constant exposure to the weather generally sufficing to undermine the strongest constitution; they are either crippled with rheumatism, or utterly broken down, as the following anecdote, not over flattering to the perspicacity of one of the parties concerned, will show. Not very long ago the leading medical man in a large provincial town, who was in the habit of giving gratuitous advice to the poor at a certain hour every morning, had just dismissed his last patient, and was on the point of leaving his consultation room, when an individual he did not recollect to have seen before knocked at the door and requested permission to speak to the 'doctor.'

'Come in, my man, and be quick

about it, for I am in a hurry,' said the physician, examining the newcomer from head to foot. 'Now then, what is the matter with you?'

Whereupon the stranger began a dismal tale of pains here, there, and everywhere, no appetite, sleepless nights, and a Leporello-like catalogue of miscellaneous woes, which the 'doctor' interrupted by abruptly inquiring how old he was.

'Forty-seven,' replied the other.

'I see,' remarked the local practitioner; 'your liver is out of order, my good fellow; you don't take exercise enough; a sedentary life is the worst thing in the world for you—the very worst. Office work, I daresay, and that sort of thing. Now, attend to me: you must walk at least five or six miles a day regularly, and be as much in the air as possible. Do you understand?'

The patient smiled faintly before he answered,

'That is just what I have been doing, sir, for the last ten years, and it is that which has brought me so low. I can't walk any longer, and have been obliged to give up my employment.'

'Eh, what?' exclaimed Hippocrates, utterly taken aback. 'What on earth *is* your employment?'

'Cross country postman!'

CHARLES HERVEY.

## A DAY AT HONOLULU.

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THE Sandwich Islands are certainly something to be thankful for in mid-ocean. Voyagers hail with gratitude a sight of land, after many days pent in a populous ship. Sickness and heat are alike forgotten in the eagerness to scamper ashore. The most ungracious cynics amongst our passengers forbear to damp the ardent expectations of strangers; for many of the travellers who bear us company are *not* strangers, having crossed the Pacific before.

A dozen or so of these lavish warm praise on the beauty of the island of Oahu, promising us a delightful day. When we anchor within the coral reefs at four A.M., a few feverish spirits are already on deck. Perhaps thoughts cast towards the blank pages of journals they labour at intervals to feed have inspired them to make capital out of a new scene. At about six o'clock, light refreshments of tea and biscuits are served in the saloon, where the ladies flutter forth in butterfly raiment. All the brave attire of the ship has been reserved for landing, and the 'Sunday go-to-meeting' feathers and furbelows which are forthcoming promise to astonish the natives. Dames and damsels who have hitherto spent their days sadly, reclining on rugs and invalid chairs, resume the perpendicular this morning, forgetting all bygone sufferings. There is a vast amount of excitement and disturbance, each inciting his or her neighbour to see or do something. Only the mammas of many children are rational, and wait calmly for the ship's break-

fast before conveying their offspring ashore. From the deck of the steamer very little of the island can be seen, as a huge building on the wharf, a long wooden shed which shelters cargo, shuts out the view of the town and surrounding hills. Upon the landing-stage a crowd of smiling decently-clothed natives squat or loiter. Some are in attendance on the little carriages, expecting to be chartered by us, and others wait patiently for our custom for their oranges and bananas. They do not beckon or gesticulate or persecute, after the manner of irrepressible Arab and Cingalese itinerant traders, but await our notice with a calm dignity. A row of gaily-dressed maidens, wearing the national long-flowing nightgowns of every hue, their dark tresses surmounted by a species of sailor-hat, trimmed with bands of feathers or wreaths of flowers, have branches of white coral and strings of brown seeds spread out for sale. The seeds are pierced and strung cleverly into designs, made up as bracelets, girles, and baskets. Some of the more coquettish saleswomen wear necklaces of bright-hued flowers, which are very pretty, setting off their dark skins to great advantage, orange and deep crimson appearing the most popular colours.

Honolulu gives an immediate impression of prosperity. There is an unusual amount of life and energy about the streets, and the harbour is full of vessels of various descriptions. The wharves proved, indeed, inconveniently

busy with discharging cargoes; for more than once we were brought to a sudden halt by vigorous timber-lifters, and the brisk draught-horses apparently had a full intention of running over us.

A large business is done here in timber, various pine woods being brought from California to supply building demands, as the Sandwich Islands are destitute of wood of any size or use. As we proceed along the quay, the Ceylon is pointed out at anchor a few hundred yards from the shore. A six months' cruise has done some damage to her paint, for externally she is anything but a smart-looking vessel.

As the passengers pour forth from our steamer, a rolling tide of carriages sets towards the town and hotel. Queer little carriages they are, holding three people besides the driver, and being surmounted with a waterproof awning. Biding our time, we saunter on foot leisurely up the streets, making investigations as we proceed. We hope to find a clear field on our arrival at the hotel, feeling sure that every one will, in hot haste, set off for Pali, a spot some nine miles distant, where, at the summit of a hill, a fine view of the island is to be obtained. Clouds of dust in this direction denote the stampede, declaring the excelsior ambition of our countrymen. As we anticipate, the cool halls of the Hawaiian hotel only echo to the footsteps of Chinese waiters and visitors in residence, who stare at us with by no means a well-bred curiosity. The notable hostelry retires discreetly from the dusty highway, well screened in its own garden behind the shelter of a group of shady trees, genus unknown to us. The building presents an imposing frontage, with

deep shadowy balconies on each story. Glimpses of hammocks and luxurious lounging chairs are invitations to idleness. A large airy coffee-room, delightfully destitute of furniture, beyond chairs and tables, proves to be equally void of human offence. We order breakfast tranquilly and eat it leisurely, doing full justice to Alpine strawberries, bananas, and fresh fish, without the customary clattering accompaniment of ships' meals. No evil genii in the shape of stewards worry our digestion; but a smiling obsequious Chinaman, in snowy linen, does our bidding with deft hands and a soft footfall. Cigars are forthcoming after the meal, and we who do not indulge in the weed lounge about the balconies, criticising coming and departing guests. The flowers growing against the hotel are rich in colour and powerful in scent. Unknown tropical plants, as well as the scarlet hibiscus, plumbago, with a very free-growing bougainvillea, are backed up by banana-trees. At nine o'clock the sun is unpleasantly warm, though fortunately a sea-breeze somewhat tempers its fierceness. We watch the ladies of the place go by in troops, apparently returning from marketing expeditions, carrying problematic bundles, about which we hazard wild speculations, and more transparent baskets, whose contents of fish and fruit are discernible. These matrons stalk along, barefooted, in shapeless majesty, highly satisfactory, no doubt, to hygienic reformers. They all carry their heads erect, in spite of lofty edifices of hair, hats, and flowers. Their garments, long, loose, and of various hues, sweep up a continual dust, and have nothing trim or even graceful to recommend them. They probably are cool, which is

the best that can be said of them. Modesty at any rate ought to be satisfied, for the human form divine is not even suggested beneath them.

After a due amount of bargaining we hire two of the little carriages from beneath the avenue of trees, and set off in two detachments to visit the suburbs. In the vicinity of the town the roads are capital, and municipal authorities deserve the highest credit. We drive past the king's new palace, as yet unfinished, but which bids fair to rival the most magnificent modern mansion of any merchant prince. His Majesty is seated at breakfast in the upper story of a garden residence, and over the wall we catch sight of his august head as we drive slowly past. Huge feather brooms, or what look like them, are being waved by attendants, with monotonous mesmeric movements. These individuals had the appearance of dusting with great discretion some precious piece of pottery. Presumably the clay whereof kings are made is not easily matched. Leading the van, we soon distance our companions, and our carriage has to draw up in a shady avenue to await their tardy arrival. Meanwhile, our driver discourses glibly and intelligibly regarding Honolulu. He is a spirited young man of more than average intelligence, taking a lively interest in the welfare of the community, and expressing sore dissatisfaction of the 'heathen Chinnee,' an importation encouraged by traders. He points out his private dwelling-place with becoming pride—a wide-spreading, one-story wooden habitation with a deep verandah, situated in a well-planted garden, of which our friend was sole proprietor. The contrast between this merry, broad-shouldered, broadcloth-clad

cabby, and the dissolute unmanly individual who is *our* native production, reminds us that civilisation eastward is still something short of perfection. We survey this landed proprietor who condescends to drive us with an additional degree of respect.

The natives unanimously entertain an aversion to Chinese emigration, which is, however, encouraged largely by influential magnates; the competition of these industrious Westerns, with their habits of order and perseverance, has had no little good effect on the less diligently-disposed Hawaiians.

Country residences are scattered for miles outside Honolulu, and are surrounded, often nearly buried, in masses of greenery. There is a look of care and cultivation about these homes which is pleasant to see, and the verdure of the smooth lawns, banana-trees, and unknown shrubs is exquisite. Water is laid on everywhere, and the hose appears to be constantly at work in every garden. The houses are, for the most part, built of wood, but they vary considerably in architecture. Some are nearly related to bungalows, while others rise ambitiously to three-storyed grandeur, supported by Corinthian pillars. There are even Gothic gables looking comically distressed beneath palm-trees. The older habitations are all buried in creepers of the most luxuriant growth, and the large-leaved banana-trees hold their own in a plantation in the rear, much as an apple orchard does in humble dwellings at home. Neat coach-houses, and generally a stable, adjoin each residence. Every one drives here, and on the wrong side of the road, as we call it, of course. England and Rome only enforce the rule 'keep to the left.' All the ladies chariooteer

the same description of vehicle as ours, and famous good horses generally rattle these light traps along the roads at a breakneck speed. We are driven up and down all the intersecting roads of the suburbs, through mazes of rich vegetation, past rice-fields and rows of cocoa-nut palms, with water gushing forth from artesian wells in every direction. Now and again we get glimpses of the sea, wonderfully blue and calm, except where it is tossed like carded wool against the coral reefs. Landwards, in the background of the pretty gardens and fertile fields, the rugged hills rise up grand and bold. They are rocky and sterile, of volcanic nature; but the outline is magnificent, and many dips and hollows vary the light and shade. Deep ravines and gullies, gloomy and dark, are relieved by patches of intensely green scrub and emerald-hued mosses. The rocks, which are flung irregularly here and there, as if in the sport of some careless wind, are fantastic in shape and highly coloured, chiefly a rich red brown. The colouring everywhere is exceptionally vivid. It is as though everything the eye rests upon was dipped in Nature's most enduring dyes. It is impossible to imagine a dull or faded landscape here. After more than two hours' driving we come back to the streets and scrutiny of the shops. There is nothing in the way of curiosities to be bought. The few Japanese and Chinese articles which find their way here are inferior in manufacture and very expensive. The photographers of course do a roaring trade with the visitors for portraits of royalty, as well as representations of native scenery. We are amused as we proceed to count the number of Chinese washing establishments. All the

laundry-work of the town appears to be done in open daylight by these deft-handed intruders. The linen is mostly hung and dried on the roofs of houses; naturally here there is no danger of smuts. The appearance of a flat roof with dozens of clothes-lines laid across it, furnished with inflated garments, is very odd.

It is midday, and the town is crowded with riders of both sexes. As we return to the hotel we meet a string of fifteen mules laden with sugar sacks, driven forward by red-shirted natives, riding on Mexican saddles enveloped in a multitude of mysterious cords, trappings, and cumbersome externals. Cavalcades of laughing young women coming in from the country, riding astride, according to the custom of the place, with no consciousness of our embarrassment, pass us with coquettish glances. They sit so well, and look so absolutely at ease in their manly attitude, that hostile criticism is impossible. We by and by discover that the glances and smiles are levelled at our Jehu. This young man carries on a running fire of comment or chaff against the fair equestrians who go by us. Judging from their sparkling eyes and ready retort, his remarks are regarded as favourable indications of his approval. That our cabby was a 'catch' in the matrimonial market, and his empty bungalow a coveted possession, raised him still higher in our estimation.

After lunch we gently cruise about the streets once more, meeting many hot and hungry acquaintance returning from Pali, scarcely vindicating the gain of an excelsior policy.

Finally, we land in the market-place, an open square, with long narrow booths open at the sides, forming rectangular passages for

purchasers. Here elderly dames are purchasing *poi* and the simple adjuncts of their daily food. Quantities of uninviting-looking fish lie exposed on the stalls, advertising odoriferous staleness. Sweet potatoes and fruits are piled upon the ground beneath at the mercy of peripatetic poultry. We resist persuasion to buy or to eat. The octopus, we are informed, constitutes a Hawaiian delicacy; but we do not see any, and are chary of believing travellers' tales. As we pass along the streets we notice several American ladies, radiant in Parisian toilettes, descending from their buggies at different shops. We learn that Californians frequently resort to Honolulu for rest and change. There are also resident American merchants in the town, which probably accounts for the vigorous life of mercantile proceedings. The fertile soil and salubrious climate, a heat well tempered by sea-breezes and constant showers, make it a charming spot for a temporary residence.

As at last we turn our faces towards the sea, one of our number suggests that a visit to the Ceylon, to inspect the mariners who have compassed so many strange lands, will be the crowning accomplishment of our day. Steering for the nearest landing-stage, through the devious mazes of many timber-yards, we purpose to charter a boat to convey us out to the steamer. The courtesy of one of the Ceylon officers makes this an unnecessary labour. Overhearing our inquiries, he promptly offers to carry us out to the ship in his own boat. In the twinkling of an eye, eight brawny British sailors row us out to the veteran P. and O. steamer. Without any ado or ceremony, we are assisted on board, and quartermaster is immediately forthcoming

to show us over it. We inspect every corner of the comfortable floating hotel, envying the ladies their artistically-furnished drawing room, and comparing the length and breadth of the deck invidiously with that of the Pacific mail-steamer, and finally going below, to have our discontent augmented by a sight of airy cabins and a spacious dining-saloon. Having asked many questions, we offer thanks for our courteous reception, and depart as we came. Odious comparisons are murmured when we get back to our temporary home. It is late in the afternoon, and steam is getting up amidst the usual din preceding a departure. Huge trunks are sliding into the baggage-room, and the precarious life of fragile bonnet-boxes is sadly endangered by their entry. No British-manufactured portmanteau is equal to an encounter with an American ark. Departing guests are being sped by their friends continuing the journey; while coming ones are certainly not being welcomed by a distracted purser and aggrieved cabin-holders, irate at the introduction of a new member to a spare berth. Frantic rushes, false alarms, bells, whistles, gongs, straining ropes, rattling chains, make a hideous discord beneath the sound of the royal band, which has taken up its position on the wharf. 'The Girls we left Behind,' 'Home, sweet Home,' and other appropriate airs are dinmed into our ears with brassy emphasis. The gangway is beset by an angry crowd. Late-returning passengers toil beneath the weight of pieces of rock and branches of bananas and coral, fettered further by flower necklaces. Some are crowned with feather bands and carry Japanese fans. All are covered with dust, and angrily jostle the

residents who have come to see us away, looking exasperatingly comfortable in shady hats and white garbs. Endless bags of sugar besiege the steamer at the last moment. In a frenzied discharge of the sacks from a truck many of them burst their bonds, and pour out a glittering stream on the wharf. Much unparliamentary Hawaiian language is the sequel of the disaster. Mahogany-skinned native boys swiftly divert our attention. These young athletes plunge into the water, and dive indefatigably for sixpences or larger coins. Glorious fights for the prizes go on in the green depths below. Brown arms and legs writhe and shoot about in what appears a human knot beneath the surface, and yet their owners extricate themselves from the entanglement, and come up smiling, amused at our fears, and ready to do similar battle for the next coin. They do not even appear

breathless after the longest contest, and the ease with which they move about seems to proclaim them of amphibious nature.

As we steam out slowly between the buoys which mark the narrow channel, we get a better view of Honolulu than it is possible to do at close quarters. The roof of the king's palace, the theatre, and all the larger and more important buildings, stand up encircled by rings of verdant foliage. The chain of mountains, which backs up the town, is seen to break down to the left, and on the right to be carried on to the verge of the sea, where it terminates in a lofty hill and an extinct crater. From afar the volcanic nature of the island reveals itself clearly. We do not lose sight of Oahu till the dusk falls, and after the stars twinkle out we still strain our gaze to get a final glimpse of its loftier peaks. With a final *vale* we go sorrowfully to rest.

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## AN OLD CUSTOM.

At the harbour-mouth of the little Norman seaport stands a lofty crucifix, high up against the sunrise and the sunset; the figure carved realistically enough, with eyes gazing over the sea, watching since time immemorial the outgoing ships. It is the last picture on the eyes of the fishermen as they sail away to northern latitudes for their hard cheerless labour off the Newfoundland coast, and the first high landmark that greets those of them who return; for of the frail vessels that venture thither sometimes no tiding comes again; and on those vessels sailing in, often some voice fails to answer when the women stream out to welcome them from the pier-head. For here there is a widow's dress in every young wife's wedding-chest. It was well thought to set it there; for who so mystically-minded as the sailor, ever face to face with the mystery and the majesty of Nature? A good thought for these simple minds to associate with the haven of their home when they start, as one of them finely expressed it, into the great waters to see the glory of God. So it stands there, and the rough sea-winds shake it, and the sea-swallows rest on the arms of the cross, and at times the spray rains over the three white figures at the base. A little while ago they built a scaffolding round it, and I saw that they were regilding the crown of thorns. To-day there was a great stir in the little town. From the old church, a mile up the inland valley, a long procession passed along the hillside road, and down the sloping streets to the port. Many children, all in white, and music, and many banners of many colours, came winding on below the great gray cliffs; little boys, in sailor's dress, carrying

a model ship; then the banner of our Lady, borne by the virgins of the town; something pathetic there also—old wrinkled faces, two of them yet dressed in the virgin white among the young girls, and a coarse jest in the crowd perhaps. The sea had never brought their lovers home, yet they followed, though their yearly prayers had little availed. Then the choristers singing—an old brass trumpet to give volume to the sound; then the priests with cross and candle; so along to the Calvary at the harbour-mouth. They are ranged round it now—the priests and choristers below, the fishermen and their banner in front, the white children in a wider ring, and all the people of the little town around. On one side the giant cliffs; on the other the calm sea, with its little sails drifting down the far horizon. Some one has crowned the plaster Madonna with a crown of white roses. A young priest is preaching at the foot of the cross. A few of the boys, in their festival dress, have broken away, and, climbing the steep grass bank that leans against the cliffs, are running races down it; but the crowd is attentive, silent, a few women crying. Then there is a prayer, and they all break up, and, chanting, form into procession again. A few peasant folk linger, and go up to put their alms in the box by the altar; one old wrinkled woman kisses the feet of each saint in turns. All is silent now; the procession passes out of sight round the streets of the little town, and the crucifix stands lonely by the sea once more. So again to-day, perhaps, there was a regilding of the crown of thorns.

RENNELL RODD.

St. Valéry en Caux.

222

## TO MY BED.

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LET poets strike the tuneful wire  
In scornful Beauty's praise,  
Far be from me the vain desire  
To emulate their lays.  
A softer subject fills my brain,  
Inspires my grateful song—  
To thee, my bed, this humble strain,  
These homely rhymes belong.

My earliest friend ! how many hours  
Of rest I owe to thee !  
When friends are cold, and fortune lowers,  
Thou still art true to me.  
'Tis said that love's an empty sound,  
And friendship but a name ;  
But thee, my bed, I've ever found,  
Night after night, the same.

Visions of infancy arise,  
Of nursery days long fled,  
Of rosy cheeks and sleepy eyes,  
And tucking up in bed :  
A kiss, and then a soft good-night,  
And heavy eyelids closing :  
Who has not known the slumber light  
Of childhood thus reposing !

Sometimes to lie awake, and watch  
The moonshine on the floor,  
Or with a rapt attention catch  
The creak of distant door ;  
Or, if in winter-time, to peep  
The closed curtains through,  
And see the fire, while footsteps creep,  
And lights go to and fro.

'Twas so in childhood. Then in youth  
To thee, my bed, I owe  
The dreams, how far surpassing truth !  
That youthful sleepers know.  
Dreams of true love and friendship warm,  
That only come at night ;  
The dawning day dispels the charm,  
And fades the vision bright.

When wearied with the discontent  
Of others, or my own,  
Such consolation thou hast lent  
That all my cares have flown.  
And I have risen on the morn,  
With purpose good and strong  
That virtue should my life adorn,  
Content to me belong.

And in that time when tears are shed,  
And daylight looks like folly,  
Calm rest I find on thee, my bed,  
Alone with melancholy.  
Then times and places, scenes I trace,  
For ever passèd by,  
And friends who've run their earthly race,  
And rest them in the sky.

Thus have I shown in rhymes uncouth  
How thou, my bed, hast been,  
Through playful childhood, hopeful youth,  
A friend in every scene.  
On thee, her quiet place of rest,  
How sorrow ceased to weep,  
How anger fled the ruffled breast,  
And yielded up to sleep.

And now, when evening breezes blow,  
And friends are hovering by,  
And age or sickness lays me low,  
And warns me I must die,  
Gently I hope to rest on thee,  
My old, my earliest friend,  
That where young life first greeted me  
Our fellowship may end.

J. E. P.

## ANECDOCE CORNER.

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY E. S. DIXON—HENRY TURNER—CHARLES HERVEY—SURGEON-GENERAL COWEN—WILLMOTT DIXON—BYRON WEBBER—THE ANECDOTE HUNTER—THE EDITOR—AND OTHERS.

### *Miss Ellen Terry's Early Days on the Stage.*

IT is no disparagement to the memory of that perfect gentleman and excellent actor, Charles Kean, to assert that he was unduly sensitive to the success of a rival actor. We had almost written *keenly* sensitive. Macready, in his diary, records with shame how when he read of the success of Phelps in the character of Shylock, at the Haymarket Theatre, he experienced bitter feelings of envy and jealousy with regard to the new actor. Some five-and-twenty years ago, Miss Ellen Terry was playing Prince Arthur to the Hubert of Ryder, with Kean as King John. At the conclusion of the scene between Hubert and Arthur there was an enthusiastic call for both the performers. But the lessee forbade the acceptance of the invitation to appear before the foot-lights. 'Only a few noisy boys in the gallery, Mr. Ryder.' On the rising of the curtain in the

following scene, the King is discovered on the throne, with Hubert in attendance. The audience at once raised a shout. 'Go forward and bow, Mr. Ryder,' whispered the King. But Hubert stood motionless, and not till the request was repeated did Ryder acknowledge the greeting of his admirers.

On the following evening Hubert led Arthur before the act-drop, although the child was nervous and diffident as to the view which would be taken by Kean of the proceeding. As Ryder left Ellen Terry, tearful, at the door of her dressing-room, he said, 'Never mind, my child; you will be famous, rich, and celebrated when all your enemies are dead, rotten, and forgotten.' A garbled version of this was taken to Kean by some meddlesome listener, and the result was a coolness between both actors.

### *Manageriana.*

A MANAGER ought to possess (1) the diplomacy of a Talleyrand, in order to get rid, politely, of petitioners for private boxes, importunate authors, patrons of ballerina maidens, fanatic composers, starters of phenomena, and producers of stars; (2) the stoicism of a Brutus, to resist the caprices and

pretensions of the crowd, both feminine and masculine, assembled behind the scenes; (3) the self-denial of St. Anthony, to withstand the seductions of his actresses, and also the nose of St. Anthony's companion, to scent out promising attractions, possible celebrities, and whatever will draw; (4) the pa-

THE knowledge of courtesy and good manners is a very necessary study. It is, like grace and beauty, that which begets liking and an inclination to love one another at the first sight, and, in the beginning of an acquaintance, a familiarity; and, consequently, that which first opens the door and introduces us to better ourselves by the examples of others, if there be anything in the society worth taking notice of.—MONTAIGNE.

tience of Job, to support the demands of the public, the carping of critics, and the jealousy of rivals and competitors.

A manager need also be a man of letters, a musician, an economist, painter, architect, physiognomist, and especially a philosopher. He should have, moreover, the wealth of Croesus, the strength of Hercules, the prudence of Ulysses, the hundred eyes of Argus, the hundred tongues of Fame, and the light foot of Achilles, in order to cut and run should circumstances require.

[Are not some few of these qualities desirable for the editor of any influential and popular periodical?]

The uneducated manager is liable to laughable mistakes. One of these gentlemen, papa Castel, was getting up a mythological ballet. His stage-manager was explaining the intended arrangement of the principal tableau. 'This raised scaffolding in the centre is Mount Olympus, where we will place all the heathen divinities; that to the left is Mount Parnassus, which we can cover with the poets of antiquity; on this, to the right, Mount Pindus, we will form three groups, composed of the nine Muses, the three Fates, and the three Graces.'

'No, no!' said papa Castel, 'that will never do; too unsymmetrical by far; too irregular. Let us have the five Muses, the five Fates, and the five Graces. That will be a much prettier arrangement.'

The most knowing managers are naturally those who have previously served in the dramatic ranks themselves. One of these, an ex-tenor who had made his fortune, and who, during his vocal career, by his hoarsenesses, his demands, and his caprices, had driven his employers half-crazy, became, when he took a theatre on his own account, the severest of task-masters and managers. The acquisition of power changes the nature of men, but very rarely to their advantage. He would suffer no poutings nor indispositions. The most trifling negligence was punished by a heavy fine. The least infraction of the terms of an engagement was met by legal proceedings—by gendarmes, if necessary.

In 1853, when he took in hand the direction of the theatre of L——, the municipality imposed on him the condition of engaging the tenor Oswald, whose talent was remarkable—especially for feigning illness at will. When Oswald took it into his head that he would not sing, he gave himself a fever by means needless to describe, but sufficiently mysterious to puzzle the doctors.

But the cunning old singer, who knew all the tricks of his trade, took his precautions in consequence. Every evening when Oswald sang, he dressed up a good-looking supernumerary in exactly the same costume as the fickle tenor, with orders to make himself conspicuous behind the scenes until the close of

CATO, being scurrilously treated by a low and vicious fellow, quietly said to him, 'A contest between us is very unequal, for thou canst bear ill language with ease, and return it with pleasure ; and to me it is unusual to hear and disagreeable to speak it.'

the performance. The constant presence of this subsidiary personage soon grew into an actual annoyance to Oswald. So one evening, between two acts of the *Muette*, he asked his manager, 'Who is that fellow, dressed up exactly like me, who always sticks himself in the way every night I sing ? What does he do here ?' 'He is your *doublure*—your substitute.' 'For what purpose ? on what account ?' 'To take your place, in case of need. Your health is so delicate ; you may any day have a fever fit, or be seized with sudden hoarseness. I don't want to be placed in the cruel necessity of closing the theatre, or returning

the money taken at the doors.' 'The deuce !' said the tenor, slightly flabbergasted, and scanning his duplicate with sidelong looks. 'Where did you pick up that muscular animal ? Has he any talent —can he sing ?' 'Divinely ! Perfect phrasing ; splendid *ut de poitrine* ; pupil of Duprez. I discovered him in Paris. But you shall judge for yourself the first evening you feel a little out of sorts. He knows all your parts, and can take them at a minute's warning. We can hear him quietly in my manager's box.' During the eight months that the season lasted Oswald had neither a single loss of voice nor the slightest touch of fever.

### Hamlet's Tombs.

OSCAR COMETTANT and a friend went forth one day in search of Hamlet's grave. They traversed the whole town of Elsinore (which was only a fishing village until King Erik of Pommern raised it to the rank of a city in 1425), and they reached a hill on which formerly stood an abbey, at the extremity of the terraced gardens of Marienlyst, where, they were told, they would behold the sublime metaphysician's tomb. Finding nothing, they inquired of a passer-by, 'Hamlet's tomb, if you please ?' 'Which tomb is the one you want ?' 'Which tomb ! Are there two Hamlets' tombs ? He cannot have been buried in two places at once.' 'Possibly. Nevertheless, there have been three Hamlets' tombs, though only half of one is still remaining. I must inform you, if you don't know it already, that one single tomb was quite insufficient to satisfy

the curiosity of English visitors. At one time there was no Hamlet's tomb at all at Elsinore ; for, as you are aware, the Danish Prince never set foot in Zealand, either alive or dead. But the English, who came in crowds to Elsinore, insisted on having one ; and so somebody made them tomb the first. But the crowds of tourists increased to such an extent, and so annoyed the owner of the land where the monument stood, that, in order to divide, if he could not suppress, the flocks of pilgrims, he set up another tomb at the further end of his property. But that did no good ; because the English —you know how curious they are ! —would visit both the tombs. He therefore, driven to despair, erected a third tomb. The two first have disappeared, and only a portion of the third remains. I suppose the English have carried away the

**T**HREE is nothing displays a genius (I mean a quickness of genius) more than a dispute, as two diamonds, encountering, contribute to each other's lustre. But, perhaps, the odds is much against the man of taste in this particular.—SHENSTONE.

rest of it piecemeal in their pockets, to enrich their Shakespearean museums.' At the indicated spot, M. Comettant found something like a milestone much the worse for wear, without any inscription, around which an English family,

father, mother, and five children (he ought to have made them twelve), were standing, apparently in earnest prayer; but on approaching, he found they were piously reciting the famous monologue, 'To be, or not to be.'

### *A Whistling Story.*

PERHAPS the man who whistles in an omnibus is a greater nuisance to his fellow-passengers than he who hums or sings. It is a matter of taste. That they are both intolerable is beyond dispute. An admonition conveyed to one of those abominable pipers by a well-known journalist and wit deserves to be recorded. He and his son were

occupants of an omnibus which also carried a whistler. 'Who is that lady who is whistling?' asked father of son, in a conspicuously audible voice. 'It is not a lady, papa,' replied the son; 'it is a gentleman.' 'A gentleman!' exclaimed the parent; 'you must be mistaken, my boy. No gentleman ever whistles in an omnibus!'

### *French-English.*

HALF-EDUCATED French folks write delightful letters, on account of the amusing absurdity of their spelling. The language lends itself to errors in orthography, and such writers take full advantage of the fact. Run through such an epistle with your eyes only, and it beats a prize-puzzle in incomprehensibility; but read it aloud, expressing the sounds indicated by the syllables, and you get clear ideas expressed in fairly proper language. It is a specimen of phonetic writing, like the eccentricities which spelling reformers have tried to introduce. Educated people—newspaper editors, for instance—who do write their mother tongue without serious blunders, seem to think correctness a needless quality whenever they quote an English word or phrase. They persist in knowing the views entertained on pass-

ing events at our 'Foreing' Office. Even M. Ferdinand de Lesseps complains that the Suez Canal was once run down as a 'buble' scheme. The author of an amusing volume, who has travelled much and believed himself proportionally polyglot, nevertheless quotes 'the righ man in the righth place, as the English say'; adding, 'Times is money,' which is perfectly true, in whatever way we interpret it. He mentions a heavy cheque drawn on 'the Americain Banck,' and a serenade given by the 'New York Musical Fond Society.' An Englishman is made to declare, 'J (jay) am a philosopher.' The portrait of our George IV.'s favourites is sketched in three words, as every one of them 'Fair, fate, forty.' An English actor off the stage—namely, 'Old Grim'—combines politeness with profanity

THE great secret of giving advice successfully is to mix up with it something that implies a real consciousness of the adviser's own defects, and as much as possible of an acknowledgment of the other party's merits. Most advisers sink both the one and the other ; and hence the failure which they meet with and deserve.

by saying, 'Good-morning, young miss,' and then swearing 'by Good !' A lady is followed by twenty-five admirers, one of whom is an 'ele-

gant sportman.' The above specimens suffice to show what a rich collection of French-English might easily be made.

### Two Royal Academy Stories.

#### ROYAL ACADEMY SCHOOLS.

Some twelve or fifteen years ago, ere the Royal Academy of Arts had migrated from the National Gallery to Burlington House, there was a certain pompous and practical R.A., who was anything but popular as a visitor with the students. He once rebuked a young gentleman in the painting-school for not using 'a gentlemanly palette,' whatever that might mean. It is related, however, that he on one occasion met with his match. He had been making himself especially disagreeable to the majority of the students, when it came to pass that a young Scotchman fell under his admonitory eye. After examining this student's work with severe attention, he turned to him, and, in a voice of depressing solemnity, said, 'Have you any private means?' 'I beg your pardon, sir?' replied the youth, literally in the Scotch manner. 'Is it your intention to make painting your profession?' 'It is,' rejoined the Scot. 'I am sorry to hear you say so,' pursued Mr. R.A., with

augmenting austerity, 'for you will never make a living as a painter.' 'I am not so sure about that,' observed the student. 'You seem to have made a pretty good thing out of it!' *Tableau!*'

#### THE LATE SIR FRANCIS GRANT.

Towards the close of his long and honourable career, the late Sir Francis Grant, President of the Royal Academy, became somewhat oblivious of the changes which were taking place in the body of which he was the head. *His* Associates, the R.A.s, of course he knew; but it was not easy for him to keep in mind the new Associates outside the sacred Forty. On one occasion he expressed a desire to know 'the name of the man with the red scarf;' and on another, impressed with the beauty of a picture which hung upon the walls at Burlington House, he said, 'Very clever, very clever; we must have him amongst us.' Both men were then A.R.A.s. The former is now a full Academician; the latter was the late Frederick Walker.

### Nothing New under the Sun.

#### THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH FORESHADOWED.

ARTHUR YOUNG, travelling in 1787, writes : 'In the evening, at Paris, to M. Lomond, a very ingenious and inventive mechanic. In electricity he has made a re-

markable discovery. You write two or three words on a paper; he takes it with him into a room, and turns a machine enclosed in a cylindrical case, at the top of which

SO great is the love of compromise in modern times, that the highest order of men, if they be shrewd men, can hardly be distinguished from the owners of badly-managed shops in their tendency to demand terms much larger than those which they mean to accept. And thus the time of the world is squandered.—SIR ARTHUR HELPS (*Brevia*).

is an electrometer—a small fine pith ball. A wire connects it with a similar cylinder and electrometer in a distant apartment; and his wife, by remarking the corresponding motions of the ball, writes down the words they indicate; from which it appears that he has formed an alphabet of motions. As the length of the wire makes no difference in the effect, a correspondence might be carried on at any distance; within and without a besieged town, for instance; or for a purpose much more worthy, and a thousand times more harmless, between two lovers prohibited or prevented from any better connection. Whatever the use may be, the invention is beautiful. M. Lomond has many other curious machines, all the entire work of his own hands; mechanical invention seems to be in him a natural propensity.'

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THE SUBMARINE CABLE ANTICIPATED.

Aldini, in his *Essay on Galvanism*, published in Paris in 1804, in which Essay he details his experiments on decapitated and strangled criminals, and that even if people do not feel after being guillotined, they possibly may after they are hanged, not only forestalled the

idea of a submarine galvanic telegraph, but actually accomplished the fact, which he then left exactly where he found it. The experiments made with 'artificial electricity' in the Lake of Geneva, by the celebrated brothers De Luc, and by the English natural philosophers on the Thames, excited Aldini to attempt analogous results in the sea itself. He took advantage of a visit to Calais to establish an electric communication, by three brass wires, between Fort Rouge (since demolished) and the western jetty. Two of these wires passed through the sea at the depth of three fathoms. He found that he could thus both give shocks to living persons on the other side of the water, and also cause convulsive movements in recently-killed animals prepared for the purpose. He afterwards was delighted to cause simultaneous contractions in the head and in the body of a little fresh-slain dog, although the two halves of its carcass were separated by an arc of more than two hundred yards, and on opposite banks of a rapid stream. He made the mouth grin and the eyelids wink in response to the jerks and kicks of the legs. The first subaqueous electric signals were the convulsive motions of dead animals.

*Novelists' Sayings.*

GEORGE ELIOT.

THERE'S nothing kills a man so soon as having nobody to find fault with but himself. It's a deal

the best way o' being master to let somebody else do the ordering, and keep the blaming in your own

**A**N Italian philosopher expresses in his motto that time was his estate; an estate indeed which will produce nothing without cultivation, but will always abundantly repay the labours of industry, and generally satisfy the most extensive desires, if no part of it be suffered to lie waste by negligence, to be overrun with noxious plants, or laid out for show rather than for use.—*Rambler*.

hands. It 'ud save many a man a stroke, I believe.—*Priscilla Lammeter*, in *'Silas Marner'*.

How will you find good? It is not a thing of choice: it is a river that flows from the foot of the Invisible Throne, and flows by the path of obedience.—*Savonarola*, in *'Romola'*.

*T. Tulliver*: Now, don't you be up to any tricks, Bob, else you'll get transported some day. *Bob Jakin*: No, no; not me, Mr. Tom. There's no law again' flea-bites. If I wasn't to take a fool in now and then, he'd never get any wiser.—*The Mill on the Floss*.

I have long expected something remarkable from you, Dan; but, for God's sake, don't go into any eccentricities! I can tolerate any man's difference of opinion, but let him tell it me without getting himself up as a lunatic. At this stage of the world, if a man wants to be taken seriously he must keep clear of melodrama.—*Sir Hugo Mallinger*, in *'Daniel Deronda'*.

Will not a tiny speck very close to our vision blot out the glory of the world, and leave only a margin by which we see the blot? I know no speck so troublesome as self.—*Middlemarch*.

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life—to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting!—*'Adam Bede'*.

Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul:  
There, mid the throng of hurrying desires  
That trample o'er the dead to seize  
their spoil,  
Lurks vengeance, footless, irresistible  
As exhalations laden with slow death,  
And o'er the fairest troop of captured joys  
Breathes pallid pestilence,  
‘*Daniel Deronda*’.

### Parliamentary Hits.

SHERIDAN being on a Parliamentary Committee, one day entered the room when all the members were seated and ready to begin business. Seeing no vacant place, he looked round the table and said, ‘Will any gentleman move—that I may take the chair?’

When it was proposed in Par-

liament to increase the judges' salaries, and the motion was carried by 169 to 39, Charles Townshend said that ‘the Book of Judges had been saved by the Book of Numbers.’

Somebody maintained, in the presence of Canning, that poverty was a virtue. The Minister ob-

IT is one thing to indulge in playful rest, and another to be devoted to the pursuit of pleasure ; and gaiety of heart during the reaction after hard labour, and quickened by satisfaction in the accomplished duty or perfected result, is altogether compatible with—nay, even in some sort arises naturally out of—a deep internal seriousness of disposition.—  
JOHN RUSKIN.

served, 'That is literally making a virtue of necessity.'

Lord Shelburne could say the most provoking things, and yet seem quite unconscious of their being so. In one of his speeches, alluding to Lord Carlisle, he said, 'The noble lord has written a comedy—' 'No, a tragedy,' interrupted Lord Carlisle. 'O, I beg pardon; *I thought it was a comedy.*'

Hearing that Mr. Calvert, ambitious of parliamentary distinction, was going to canvass the Borough, James Smith exclaimed, 'I am very glad to hear it; I got wet through yesterday between Guy's Hospital and Tooley-street.'

When Lord George Gordon asked Selwyn to choose him again for Ludgershall (where the latter's property lay), he replied that the electors would not have him. 'O yes; if you recommended me they would have me, if I came from the coast of Africa.' 'That is according to what part of the coast you came from. They certainly would if you came from the Guinea Coast.'

When Mr. Pitt was very young in office, several angry altercations

took place between him and Mr. Sheridan in the debates in the House of Commons. He once said to Sheridan, 'You had better withdraw your attention from politics, and direct it exclusively to the stage, where the display of your abilities cannot fail to amuse the public.' Sheridan was piqued at this professional allusion, and instantly replied, 'If I do turn my attention to the stage, I cannot be at a loss for a diverting character; I will certainly, in compliment to you, revive the part of the angry boy in the old play of the *Alchemist.*'

The Earl of Lonsdale was so extensive a proprietor and patron of boroughs that he returned nine members to Parliament, who were facetiously called Lord Lonsdale's ninepins. One of the members thus designated having made a very extravagant speech in the House of Commons, was answered by Mr. Burke in a vein of the happiest sarcasm, which elicited from the House loud and continued cheers. Mr. Fox, entering the House just as Mr. Burke was sitting down, inquired of Sheridan what the House was cheering. 'O, nothing of consequence,' replied Sheridan, 'only Burke has knocked down one of Lord Lonsdale's ninepins.'

### *A Forerunner of the Great Eastern.*

We smile patronisingly when we read travellers' descriptions of the alarm of the untutored savage at his first sight of a steamboat or steam locomotive. But 'they didn't

know everything down in Judee' some fifty or sixty years ago. In other words, some of the untutored inhabitants of these islands, where the steam-engine was invented

THE Irish Church revenue, said Sydney Smith, is made up of halfpence, potatoes, rags, bones, and fragments of old clothes ; and these, Irish old clothes. What, he asked, then, is the object of all governments ? The object of all governments is roast mutton, potatoes, claret, a stout constable, an honest justice, a clear highway, a free chapel. What trash to be bawling in the streets about the Green Isle, the Isle of the Ocean, the bold anthem of 'Erin-go-bragh' ! A far better anthem would be 'Erin go bread and cheese ; ' 'Erin go cabins that will keep out the rain ; ' 'Erin go pantaloons without holes in them.'

and brought to perfection, were as much alarmed at their first sight of 'puffing Billy' and the first paddle-steamer as the noble savage has been since. It is related of an old lady, who was surprised in her unsuspicous wanderings on the banks of the Tees by the appearance of the packet, that she screamed when she beheld volumes of smoke issuing from the approaching funnel, and offered up a prayer. 'There's nowt to be fayled at, Betty,' ob-

served a wanderer of the male sex, who happened to be better informed than she ; 'it's nobbut t' steam-packet.' 'I care not what it is, John, it'll niver prosper.' 'Why, how's that, Betty ?' 'Leuk at it, John ; leuk at it. T' tide yan way, and t' wind same, and it comin' on in their face. It'll niver prosper, John, because it's gine (going) agin baith God and Natur !'

### *A Turf Anecdote.*

ONE of the biographers of Blair Athol, and the best, relates how the schemes of the firm of bookmakers, who had the management of the horse in the market prior to the Derby, were frustrated by the imprudence of the principal member of the combination, since dead. They had backed General Peel, winner of the Two Thousand Guineas, to win the Derby, and they 'stood' to win a great stake. In the case of General Peel's breaking down before the day, they had Blair Athol to run for them ; but it was more to their interest, pecuniarily, that he should be withdrawn, and Lord Glasgow's horse allowed to win. It appears that Jackson, the owner of Blair Athol, escaped from his confederates, who knew he was not to be trusted alone, late one night at Newmarket, and repaired to the White

Hart, where he was 'bounced' by the company into backing his own horse to such an extent that the confederacy were compelled to send 'Blair' to the post. How he won, with General Peel second, is a matter of history. But he did not carry as much of the money of the party as 'the General' would have done. That White Hart has figured in more than one dramatic episode of Turf history. Some years ago, during one of the Spring Meetings at Newmarket, a *coup* was effected, which was, in its way, as remarkable as Blair Athol's sudden advancement in the Derby betting. In order to effect this it was necessary to wait until the gentlemen of the press had retired for the night. The wagering at the subscription-rooms, which are under the control of the stewards of the Newmarket race-

WHICH of the seven supports to human nature, under trouble and difficulties, can be most relied upon and least spared? The seven supports are good spirits, good temper, pride, vanity, power of endurance, hopefulness, and the love of others. To the above question a cynic answered, 'Without doubt, vanity.' Why? Because it is always present. Common parlance proves this fact. You can say of a man, He has lost his good spirits, his good temper, his love for others, his pride, his power of endurance, his hopefulness; but who ever heard any one say of another, 'He has lost his vanity'?—SIR ARTHUR HELPS (*Brevia*).

meetings, had that night been of an unexciting character, although the City and Suburban Handicap was very near at hand. The rooms were closed, the reporters sent off their last telegrams, the shutters were put up at the telegraph-office, and it seemed that everybody who had any business to transact in connection with the races had retired for the night. This, however, was not the case. No sooner had the reporters got clear away, than an adjournment was made on the part of a number of heavy speculators on the Turf to the White Hart, in which hostelry, unknown to the great but sleeping

world of Newmarket, a horse called Delight was backed for the City and Suburban Handicap to win a fortune. Next morning, long before the news became common property, the telegraph-office was besieged by bookmakers, backers, commission-agents, and touts eager to anticipate the defeated newspaper press, in apprising their agents or patrons of 'the good thing.' The result of that night at the White Hart is historical. Delight won the City and Suburban, as the chroniclers of such circumstances would express it, 'in a walk.'

### *How to become an Orator.*

It is related of one Job Walmsley, a Yorkshire advocate of teetotalism, who was humorous in a rough way as well as eloquent, that he was waited upon on one occasion by a young gentleman who was ambitious to shine upon platforms after the manner of Jabez Inwards, Simeon Smithard, and Mr. J. B. Gough. 'Tha wants to be a public speyker, dos' tha,

lad? Au' tha thinks awm the chep to put tha up to a wrinkle about it! Tha's reight, I am. Now, harks tha. When tha rises to mek thy speych, hit taable an' oppen thy mawth. If nowt comes, tak' a sup o' watther an' hit taable again. Then oppen thy mawth wider than afoor. Then if nowt comes tak' thyself off, and leave public speykin' to such as me.'

### *Importance of Architects.*

THE Rev. J. Jessopp tells the following anecdote. The late Mr. Alexander, the eminent architect, was under cross-examination at Maidstone by Serjeant, afterwards

Baron, Garrow, who wished to detract from the weight of his testimony, and, after asking him what was his name, proceeded: 'You are a builder, I believe?'

HALF the evil in this world comes from people not knowing what they do like—not deliberately setting themselves to find out what they really enjoy. All people enjoy giving away money, for instance: they don't know *that*—they rather think they like keeping it; and they *do* keep it under this false impression, often to their great discomfort. Everybody likes to do good; but not one in a hundred finds *this* out.—JOHN RUSKIN.

'No, sir, I am not a builder; I am an architect.' 'They are much the same, I suppose?' 'I beg your pardon, sir; I cannot admit that; I consider them to be totally different.' 'O, indeed! perhaps you will state wherein this great difference exists?' 'An architect, sir,' replied Mr. Alexander, 'conceives the design, prepares the plan, draws out the specifications—in short, supplies the mind; the builder is merely the bricklayer or the carpenter. The builder, in fact,

is the machine; the architect, the power that puts the machine together, and sets it going.' 'O, very well, Mr. Architect, that will do. And now, after your very ingenious distinction without a difference, perhaps you can inform the court who was the architect of the Tower of Babel?' The reply for promptness and wit is not to be rivalled in the whole history of rejoinder: 'There was no architect, sir, and hence the confusion.'

H. L. C.

### *A Reminiscence of Balzac.*

M. CHARLES DIDIER, author of *Rome Souterraine*, once told me that, at the commencement of his literary career, having some business to transact with his publisher, he found him engaged in listening to a stout slovenly-dressed individual, who was eloquently describing to him the site and architectural details of a house he intended building. So gigantic was the plan, and so utterly regardless of the expense to be incurred appeared the speaker,

that Didier was literally astounded, and, on the stranger's departure, asked who he was. 'What! don't you know Balzac?' exclaimed the publisher. 'Never saw him before. He must have made more money than people give him credit for.' 'Possibly,' coolly returned the other. 'All I can say is, he came here to borrow five hundred francs in advance on a volume, of which he has not written a line, and, in all probability, never will.'

C. H.

### *Some Wits of the Past.*

ONE evening at Carlton House the Prince Regent observed to the author of *The Heir-at-Law*, 'Why, Colman, you are older than I am.' George replied, 'O no, sir; I could not have taken the liberty of coming into the world before your Royal Highness.'

When a subscription was pro-

posed for Fox, and some one was observing that it would require some delicacy, and wondering how Fox would take it, Selwyn said, 'Take it? Why, quarterly to be sure.'

On hearing that an acquaintance had hurried across to the Continent to avoid his importunate cre-

ONE must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, 'He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies.' There is, then, creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labour and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world.—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

itors, George Selwyn observed, 'it is a temptation to commit suicide.'

Professor Porson of Cambridge, awaking one evening after slumbering over his cups, and finding his candle extinguished, is said to have contented himself by uttering the familiar Greek antithesis *οὐτε ταῦτα οὐτε ταῦτα* ('neither this one here nor the other'). The words read slowly as English (the first and third being subdivided) express the doctor's meaning!

To all letters soliciting his subscription to anything, Erskine had a regular form of reply, viz. 'Sir, I feel much honoured by your application to me, and I beg to subscribe'—here the reader had to turn over the leaf—'myself your very obedient servant, &c.'

'My lord,' said Dr. Parr to Erskine, whose conversation had delighted him, 'should you die first I mean to write your epitaph.' 'Dr. Parr,' was the reply,

One of Curran's friends, a notorious and lucky gambler, getting entangled in conversation with him, gradually lost his temper, and at last said with great vehemence, 'No man, sir, shall trifle with me with impunity.' Curran corrected him by saying, 'Play with you, you mean.'

One evening, at a private party at Oxford, at which Dr. Johnson was present, a recently published essay on the future life of brutes was referred to; and a gentleman, disposed to support the author's opinion that the lower animals have an 'immortal part,' familiarly remarked to the doctor, 'Really, sir, when we see a very sensible dog, we don't know what to think of him.' Johnson, turning quickly round, replied, 'True, sir; and when we see a very foolish fellow, we don't know what to think of him.'

### An Irish Barometer.

KEEP him always reversed in your thoughts, night and day,  
Like an Irish barometer turned the wrong way.  
If he's up, you may swear that foul weather is nigh;  
If he's down, you may look for a bit of blue sky.  
Never mind what debaters or journalists say,  
Only ask what *he* thinks, and then think t'other way.  
He is all for the Turks! then, at once, take the whole  
Russian empire, Czar and all, to your soul.  
In short, whatsoever he talks, thinks, or is,  
Be your thoughts, words, and essence, the contrast of his.

FLOWERS seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity. Children love them. Quiet, tender, contented, ordinary people love them as they grow. Luxurious and disorderly people rejoice in them gathered. They are the cottager's treasure ; and in the crowded town, mark, as with a little broken fragment of rainbow, the windows of the workers, in whose hearts rests the covenant of peace. Passionate or religious minds contemplate them with fond feverish intensity ; the affection is seen serenely calm in the works of many old religious painters, and mixed with more open

### *A Recipe for Insomnia.*

'A FRIEND of mine,' says Lord Erskine, 'suffered from a continual wakefulness, and various methods were tried to send him to sleep, but in vain. At last his physicians resorted to an expedient

which succeeded perfectly. They dressed him in a watchman's coat, put a lantern into his hand, placed him in a sentry-box, and—he was asleep in ten minutes.'

### *Impromptus.*

BUSHE, the Irish Chief Baron, made this impromptu verse upon two agitators who had refused to fight duels, one on account of his affection for his wife, and the other because of his love for his daughter :

'Two heroes of Erin, abhorrent of slaughter,  
Improved on the Hebrew command :  
One honoured his wife, and the other his  
daughter,  
That his days might be long in the  
land.'

Dr. Croly said very smart things and with surprising readiness. I was at his table one day when one of the guests inquired the name of a pyramidal dish of barley-sugar. Some one replied, 'A pyramid à *Macédoine*.' 'For what use?' rejoined the other. 'To give a *Philip* to the appetite,' said Croly.—W. H. HARRISON, *Reminiscences.*

Dr. Young was walking in his garden at Welwyn, in company with two ladies (one of whom he afterwards married), when the servant came to acquaint him a gentleman wished to speak with him. As he refused to go, one lady took

him by the right arm, the other by the left, and led him to the garden-gate ; when, finding resistance in vain, he bowed, laid his hand upon his heart, and spoke the following lines :

Thus Adam looked, when from the garden driv'n,  
And thus disputed orders sent from Heav'n.  
Like him I go, but yet to go am loth ;  
Like him I go, for angels drove us both.  
Hard was his fate, but mine is more unkind ;  
His Eve went with him, but mine stays behind.'

Sir George Rose, walking up Gower-street one day, was hailed by Jack Bannister (then an old man) from the opposite side. 'Stop a moment, Sir George, and I'll come over to you.' 'No,' replied Rose ; 'I never made you cross yet, and I'll not begin now.' On his return home he wrote and sent to Bannister these lines :

'With seventy years upon his back,  
Still is my honest friend 'Young Jack,'  
Nor spirits checked, nor fancy slack,  
But fresh as any daisy.  
Though Time has knocked his stumps  
about,  
He cannot bowl his temper out :  
And all the Bannister is stout,  
Although the steps be crazy.'

and true country sentiment in those of our own Pre-Raphaelites. To the child and the girl, the peasant and the manufacturing operative, to the grisette and the nun, the lover and monk, they are precious always. But to the men of supreme power and thoughtfulness, precious only at times ; symbolically and pathetically often to the poets ; but rarely for their own sake. They fall forgotten from the great workman's and soldier's hands. Such men will take in thankfulness crowns of leaves or crowns of thorns—not crowns of flowers.

—JOHN RUSKIN.

### Quite Probable.

A WELL-KNOWN member of a literary and art club, one of the most popular of the institutions of Bohemia, a gentleman who is sensitive on the subject of his manifold gifts, was undergoing a roasting on the subject of his voice. The chaff was gentle, and entirely good-humoured ; but it was not taken in good part. Your 'Admirable Crichtons' are not the best-tempered creatures in the world. Well, this gentleman, who, in the course of one revolving moon,

could, if he were required, put the famous George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in the shade, was chafing under his club-fellows' humorous criticisms of his upper register and his lower register, his head notes and his chest notes, when a new-comer observed, 'There is one note which our friend Blondel has not got in his voice.' 'And what is that?' rejoined Blondel fiercely. 'What is that, sir?' The quiet reply put an end to the controversy. It was '*A bank note.*'

### Truth and Impudence.

At the breaking up of a fashionable party at the West End of town, one of the company said he was about to 'drop in' at Lady Blessington's ; whereupon a young gentleman, a perfect stranger to the speaker, very modestly said, 'O, then, you can take me with you ; I want very much to know her, and you can introduce me.' While the other was standing

aghast at the impudence of the proposal, and muttering something about being but a slight acquaintance himself, &c., Sydneay Smith observed, 'Pray oblige our young friend ; you can do it easily enough by introducing him in a capacity very desirable at this close season of the year—say you are bringing with you the *cool of the evening.*'

### Our Old Divorce Law.

A MAN being convicted of bigamy before Mr. Justice Maule, the following dialogue took place : *Clerk of Assize* : 'What have you to say why judgment should not be passed upon you according to law?' *Prisoner* : 'Well, my lord, my wife took up with a hawker and ran away five years ago, and I

have never seen her since, and I married this woman last winter.' *Mr. Justice Maule* : 'I will tell you what you ought to have done ; and, if you say you did not know, I will tell you that the law conclusively presumes that you did. You ought to have instructed your attorney to bring an action against

WORK every hour, paid or unpaid ; see only that thou work, and thou canst not escape thy reward. Whether thy work be fine or coarse, planting corn or writing epics, so only it be honest work, done to thine own approbation, it shall earn a reward to the senses as well as to the thought. No matter how often defeated, you are born to victory. The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.

—R. W. EMERSON.

the hawker for criminal conversation with your wife. That would have cost you about 100*l.* When you had recovered substantial damages against the hawker, you would have instructed your proctor to sue in the ecclesiastical courts for a divorce *a mensa et thoro*. That would have cost you 200*l.* or 300*l.* more. When you had obtained a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, you would have had to appear by counsel before the House of Lords for a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*.

The bill might have been opposed in all its stages in both Houses of Parliament ; and, altogether, you would have had to spend about 1000*l.* or 1200*l.* You will probably tell me you never had a thousand farthings of your own in the world ; but, prisoner, that makes no difference. Sitting here as a British judge, it is my duty to tell you that this is not a country in which there is one law for the rich and another for the poor.'

### *A Just Pride.*

At a polytechnic exhibition, held at one of our northern towns some few years ago, there was exhibited a model of an iron river-steamer, which had been built in a neighbouring shipyard, and afterwards taken to pieces and despatched to India in sections. One one occasion a visitor to the exhibition, who was standing in the vicinity of the model, had his attention drawn to a sturdy-looking little fellow, apparently a workman, who was examining the object with an air of intense interest. Visitor number one approached the model and paused. Turning to him with great earnestness, the little man, speaking with a strong Northumbrian burr, said, 'Misthor,

can' thou read ?' On receiving an answer in the affirmative, the inquirer continued, 'Awwish thou'd read what's written on this card.' The request was complied with. The description of the steamer was recited in distinct tones. 'Is that aal ?' asked the querist, with a lugubrious air. That was all. 'Nowt else ?' Nothing else. 'Is there nowt about the chep that rowled the plates ?' On being assured that the name and achievements of that individual had been omitted from the legend, the little fellow exclaimed, in angry earnest, though it sounded funny, 'Why, misthor, aw's the chep that rowled the plates, and they hennot put my neyame on the card !'

### *American Notes.*

AN IRISH-AMERICAN BULL.  
The American Congress-man of the present day is a mild individual compared with some of the orna-

ments of the senate who flourished about the time when 'Bon Gaultier' wrote the 'Alabama Duel.' A prominent member of that

**WISDOM OF THE HEAD AND OF THE HEART.**—The greatest intellects ought not to rank at the top of their species any more than the means rank above the end. The instinctive wisdom of the heart can *realise*, while the all-mooting subtlety of the head is only doubting. It is a beautiful feature in the angelical hierarchy of the Jews that the seraphs rank first, and the cherubs after; that is to say, Love before Knowledge.—ANON.

glorious set was one Mullins from Tennessee. He would dance and kick up his heels in a very kittenish manner, and he had a cheerful habit of hitting his fellow-members a whacking blow on the back when they least expected it. He is best remembered, though, by a funeral oration which he delivered on a Virginian member who had been killed in a row by the Ku-Klux. More lies had been told about the lamented deceased than could be collected from the inscriptions in a fashionable cemetery in the course of a week, when Mullins was called upon. It was a great speech, but by far the finest part of it was this passage: 'He has gone down to his grave wrapped in the peaceful soliloquy of his own blood.'

—  
SOMETHING LIKE A SPEAKER  
AGAINST TIME.

It is calculated to sadden the hearts of the Parnellites generally, and those of the members for Sligo, Wexford, Cavan, and Dungarvan in particular, to learn that the champion parliamentary speaker against time is a Canadian who was born in the United States of America. His name now is Amor de Cosmos; in his youth it was Alexander Smith. Before the formation of the Dominion he was a member of the Victoria Parliament, and, in a hopeless minority, opposed an iniquitous bill designed to rob many settlers of their land. The majority, sure of success, delayed passing the bill until near the close of the session. At ten

o'clock one morning De Cosmos rose to speak against it; at noon he had reached 'in the first place,' and sunset found him at 'thirdly.' The alarmed majority tried to break him down, but with no success, and finally settled down to watch his desperate struggles. Without a moment's respite to eat or rest, De Cosmos kept on talking all through the weary night and the following morning, until, just as the clock struck the hour of noon, exhausted nature gave way, and, with blood streaming from cracked lips and with staring eyes, he fainted in the arms of his friends. But his triumph was complete, for at that moment the Parliament was by law adjourned *sine die*, and the offensive measure was dead.

—  
AMERICAN ADVERTISING.

The declaration is truer now than ever it was. We have much to learn from our American cousins in the art of advertising. This is the kind of alluring invitation which is posted up near the ticket-offices of the railway-stations: 'Remember Ashtabula! where, out of a hundred persons killed, eight had accident policies in the Traveller's, amounting to 32,000 dollars. It cost them only 252 dollars 50 cents. Get a policy before you start.'

—  
THE HUMOURS OF EXAMINATIONS.

In a list of incidents of examinations of candidates for scholastic

HIS training had been that of the old Persians, 'to speak the truth and draw the bow,' both of which savage virtues he had acquired to perfection, as well as the equally savage ones of enduring pain cheerfully, and of believing it to be the finest thing in the world to be a gentleman ; by which word he had been taught to understand the careful habit of causing needless pain to no human being, poor or rich, and of taking pride in giving up his own pleasure for the sake of those who were weaker than himself. For the rest, he never thought about thinking or felt about feeling, and had no ambition whatever beyond pleasing his father and mother, getting, by honest means, the maximum of 'red quarrenders' and mazard cherries, and going to sea when he was big enough. Neither was he what would be called nowadays by many a pious child ; for though he said his Creed and Lord's

honours and 'the ministry,' which is given in an American journal, we meet with not a few replies that bear a striking family likeness to some that have passed into the humorous literature of this country. A number, however, are new and good. Here is one : 'Is life worth living, professor?' elicited the sage reply, 'That depends on the liver.' Here is a scene in a recitation-room at Columbia. The bell has just rung, and the class is impatient to leave. Professor :

### Variorum.

A LONDON tradesman, who had hired a few months ago a lodgings for his family in the neighbourhood of Blackheath, was much alarmed, from what he read in the papers, at the prospect of being robbed on his way home. 'Take a pair of pistols with you,' suggested one of his friends. 'Money thrown away,' he replied. 'If I did, the thieves would be sure to steal them.'

—  
A governor of one of the French provinces never travelled unless accompanied by a long train of pages, each of whom enjoyed, among other privileges, that of attending all dramatic perfor-

'Now, gentlemen, I have a mortgage on you for a few minutes yet.' Mr. H. : 'And, sir, you don't get much interest from us either.' Similar was the case when the professor, looking at his watch about the close of the recitation-hour, observed, 'As we have a few minutes left, I should like to hear any one ask a question, if he be so disposed.' Thereupon came the pertinent inquiry, 'What time is it, please ?'

ances without paying. The manager of the theatre in a small country town complained bitterly of this, to him, unprofitable arrangement, and petitioned the great man to restrict the right of free admission to one or two of his followers. 'They would make but little difference in my receipts,' he said ; 'but monseigneur will allow that a certain number of pages form a volume.'

—  
A little girl, accompanying her mother on a visit to an old lady, the latter showed the child her parrot, in a cage by the window, warning her at the same time not to go too near, lest he should

Prayer night and morning, and went to service at the church every forenoon, and read the day's Psalms with his mother every evening, and had learnt from her and his father that it was infinitely noble to do right, and infinitely base to do wrong; yet (the age of children's books having not yet dawned on the world) he knew nothing more of theology or of his own soul than is contained in the Church Catechism. It is a question, however, on the whole, whether, though grossly ignorant according to our modern notions of science and religion, he was altogether untrained in manhood, virtue, and godliness, and whether the barbaric narrowness of his information was not somewhat counterbalanced both in him and in the rest of his generation by the depth, and breadth, and healthiness of his education.—CHARLES KINGSLEY (*Amyas Leigh in 'Westward Ho!'*).

bite her. 'Why should he bite me?' she asked. 'Because, my dear, he doesn't know you.' 'Then please tell him that I am Mary Anne.'

—  
Lord Chesterfield, hearing that a man of low family had married the daughter of a lady not renowned for her morality, remarked that 'nobody's son had married everybody's daughter.'

—  
An old lady, residing in one of the charming villas near Tours, observing that her watch had stopped, told her maid to see what o'clock it was on the sundial in the garden. In a few minutes Mdlle. Nicole returned, quite out of breath, and carrying something heavy in her apron. 'Ma foi, madame,' said she, 'I can't make out what it says, so I have brought it in here, that madame may look at it herself.'

—  
Amongst Europeans and the English-speaking peoples the out-and-out vegetarian is rare. Vegetarians of the type of Cardinal Newman (who would leave the edible fowls of the air either to die a natural death or be slain by 'the divine dexterity' of birds and beasts of prey) are very excep-

tional beings. Ardent vegetarians claim Benjamin Franklin as an exemplar of their principles. Hear him, ye followers of the late Mr. Brotherton, M.P., and drop him for evermore: 'During a calm which stopped us above Block Island, the crew employed themselves in fishing for cod, of which they caught a great number. I had hitherto adhered to my resolution of not eating anything that had possessed life; and I considered on this occasion, agreeably to the maxims of my master Tyron, the capture of every fish as a sort of murder committed without provocation, since these animals had neither done, nor were capable of doing, injury to any one that should justify the measure. This mode of reasoning I conceived to be unanswerable. Meanwhile I had formerly been extremely fond of fish; and when one of these cod was taken out of the frying-pan, I thought its flavour delicious. I hesitated some time between principle and inclination, till at last recollecting that, when the cod had been opened, some small fish were found in its belly, I said to myself, "If you eat one another, I see no reason why we may not eat you." I accordingly dined on the cod with no small degree of pleasure,

**H**E that will give himself to all manner of ways to get money may be rich ; so he that lets fly all he knows or thinks may by chance be satirically witty. Honesty sometimes keeps a man from growing rich, and civility from being witty.—SELDEN.

and have since continued to eat like the rest of mankind, returning occasionally to my vegetable plan.'

—  
‘What are your political opinions?’ asked A. of B. ‘That depends,’ replied B., ‘on the person I am talking to.’

—  
A striking illustration of the invincible indifference of the new generation to the guides, philosophers, and friends of the old was supplied by an episode in the Hyde Park riots, when a surging crowd broke down the park railings. There was, of course, a mass meeting in Trafalgar-square, at which much mild sedition was poured forth, and many pockets picked. In fact, there were a series of mass meetings. At one of these, held contiguous to the left ear of one of Landseer’s lions, there appeared a portly figure surmounted by a bearded face and what phrenologists call ‘a fine head.’ His hair was white—with years. Silence having been obtained, he exclaimed at the top of a voice that had seen service (if a voice can see), ‘Gentlemen, I think it right to tell you that I am HENRY VINCENT.’ The once famous orator paused, and—*nobody cheered*.

—  
Returning from hunting one day, George III. entered affably into conversation with his wine-merchant, Mr. Carbonel, and rode with him side by side a considerable way. Lord Walsingham was in attendance ; and watching an opportunity, took Mr. Carbonel aside, and whispered something to him. ‘What’s that? what’s that Walsingham has been saying to

you?’ inquired the good-humoured monarch. ‘I find, sir, I have been unintentionally guilty of disrespect. My lord informed me that I ought to have taken off my hat whenever I addressed your Majesty; but your Majesty will please to observe that, whenever I hunt, my hat is fastened to my wig, and my wig is fastened to my head, and I am on the back of a very high-spirited horse, so that if anything goes off we must *all go off together!*’ The king laughed heartily at this apology.

—  
Louis XII. one day reproached a prelate with the luxury of his manner of living, and told him that the clergy did not live so splendidly in the early ages. ‘No, sir,’ replied the prelate, ‘not in the time of the *shepherd* kings.’

—  
Dr. Parr, who was neither very choice nor delicate in his epithets, once called a clergyman a *fool*, and there was probably some truth in his application of the word. The clergyman, however, being of a different opinion, declared he would complain to the bishop of the usage. ‘Do so,’ added the learned Grecian, ‘and my Lord Bishop will *confirm* you.’

—  
Nobody was more bitterly witty than Lord Ellenborough. A young lawyer, trembling with fear, rose to make his first speech, and began: ‘My lord, my unfortunate client—my lord, my unfortunate client—my lord—’ ‘Go on, sir, go on,’ said Lord Ellenborough; ‘as far as you have proceeded hitherto, the court is entirely with you.’

## THE COMET.

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DARK is the sky to-day, and overcast,  
Pale, gray, and cloudy; wrinkled with sad lines,  
As the wan face of one whom grief and pain  
Have kept from sleep and seared with mournful signs ;  
And yet, gray sky, no sad night-hours were thine,  
For in thy calm serenest atmosphere  
The crescent moon was seen ; supremely fair  
She gleamed ere setting on our hemisphere.  
Thy happy stars—the 'fixed,' the 'wanderers'—  
Sang to each other all the wing'd time,  
And told God's glory in those silver tones  
That best beseem them and their theme sublime.

Why, in that radiant region of delight  
Rose there a mist to vex the pearly night ?  
Why, from the circle of earth's horizon  
Strayed one wild cloud, a 'mare's-tail,' into sight ?  
Nay, as it beat up in its onward course  
It grew more like the broom of childhood's lore,  
Which was to sweep all cobwebs from the sky,  
And let them gaze through the empyrean door  
Unchecked upon the shining strands of gold  
For ever, with their pure bright childish eyes—  
And then this cloud changed to a sheaf of corn,  
Bound with our praises and for Paradise.

'O watcher on the earth, yet watch awhile,'  
So sang a star's voice, soft and clear ;  
'No children's dream is this bright mystery,  
No sheaf nor angel's flashing wing is here.  
Look on, dear mortal, through your window-pane,  
Soon, soon, enchanted you will recognise  
The bright starred head just turned away,  
The fiery pilgrim through your northern skies,  
The mighty traveller of the realms of space,  
Soft-bearded, bright, who now within our sight  
Moves under autumn's grave Copernicus.  
O, welcome him, dear comrade of the night !'

K. G.

Oct. 24, 1882.

## AN EVERY-DAY IDYL.

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How small the world is ! Even Love  
Cannot take wing from grove to grove  
Without some awkward meeting.  
I preach no pretty paradox  
About a modernised Miss Fox,  
But love that breaks through walls and locks—  
The story bears repeating.

Six months ago, at Almack's ball,  
This loving couple chanced to fall  
In love with one another ;  
And for the space of one short night  
They danced beneath the electric light,  
And sat in corners out of sight  
Of chaperon and brother.

All through the soft sweet month of May,  
And part of June, they met each day,  
Till love grew single-hearted.  
And so the summer passed, until,  
Alas ! they quarrelled—lovers will—  
About some other Jack or Jill,  
And, sad to say, they parted.

They sent Love's letters back by post;  
They saw in every dream Love's ghost ;  
But pride is hard to smother.  
O, what so strong as circumstance  
To help the author of romance ?  
They met in this bleak lane by chance,  
And recognised each other.

So far their story's known ; the rest  
I have unpublished 'by request,'  
As all the world disparages  
The little scandals that surround  
All those that Love with bliss hath crowned.  
What should be known is always found  
'Neath 'Births' and 'Deaths' and 'Marriages.'

A. M. H.



AN EVERY-DAY IDYL.

See the Veto.